

# Bledington Primary School



## Policy for Children in Care (CIC) (Looked After Children (CIC/LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PCIC/LAC))

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### Safeguarding Statement

At Bledington Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Bledington Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

### Rationale

Bledington Primary School recognises that CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC can experience specific and significant disadvantages within a school setting. We are committed to ensuring that they reach their potential in all areas. We recognise that CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC may have faced significant trauma in the form of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) including abuse, neglect, loss and/or rejection. When children are exposed to these adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their learning, as well as on their ability to think and to interact with others.

Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, national progress and attainment data clearly shows that CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC are at greater risk of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Helping CIC/LAC succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority in our school.

Bledington Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that CIC/LAC can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing.

Bledington Primary School can be a source of stability for children who may have been subject to emotional distress and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and thrive.

## **Policy (Legal Framework)**

### **Looked after children (CIC/LAC)**

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning, based on the Children Act 1989: a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if they fall into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21]
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV]
- is subject to a placement order

**PCIC/LAC** children are those who:

- are no longer CIC/LAC by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or
- were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Every local authority is required to appoint an officer to make sure that their duty to promote the educational achievement of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC is properly discharged; this officer is called the Virtual School Head (VSH). The duties of the VSH are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children*" – February 2018.

The governing body of a maintained school and the proprietor of an academy must ensure that an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff, undertakes the responsibilities within the school to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school's roll; this person is the 'designated teacher' (DT). The duties of the DT are defined in the DfE statutory guidance "*The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children*" – February 2018.

## **Principles**

Bledington Primary School is committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC in the following ways:

- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.
- Providing a climate of acceptance and challenging negative stereotypes.
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly-based education that meets the needs of the individual child.
- Ensuring that (CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC) students have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the school, including the curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience.
- Ensuring CIC/LAC have a PEP that addresses all aspects of education including health and wellbeing and ensures that appropriate support is in place to promote progress.
- Ensuring that carers/parents, social workers and virtual school staff (where relevant) are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensuring that (CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC) students are involved, where practicable, in decisions about their education, including affecting their future provision.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained DT is appointed, who will be responsible for all CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.
- Prioritising a reduction in exclusions and promoting attendance.
- Ensuring discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially regarding schoolwork on "family".

## **Procedures**

### **Admissions**

Bledington Primary School welcomes all CIC/LAC.

All CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC should have the highest priority within school admission arrangements. The school recognises that CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC are an 'excepted group' and will be prioritised in our over-subscription criteria following the DfE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked After Children (England) Regulations 2006).

Due to care placement changes, CIC/LAC children may enter the Academy mid-term. It is vital that these students are given a positive welcome. If necessary, they may need to be offered additional support and pre-entry visits to help the student settle.

## **The PEP (Personal Education Plan)**

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the CIC/LAC starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary (at least termly and within 6 months of the previous PEP). The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns, ensure appropriate support is in place and set SMART targets. The child should be involved in their PEP by attending the meeting and/or sharing their views or in another way (e.g. gathered by the DT before the meeting).

We will have robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are reflected in the PEP and addressed through the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) framework as soon as possible.

## **Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)**

PPP for CIC/LAC will be delegated to schools by the relevant virtual school. We will allocate the Pupil Premium Plus funding (PPP) to support appropriate provision for individual CIC/LAC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy and the child's PEP. We will work in partnership with the child's Virtual School to ensure that CIC/LAC receive the full range of support to which they are entitled to enable them to make progress and achieve in all aspects of school life.

For PCIC/LAC, the PPP funding will go directly to the school's budget if the child is listed as PCIC/LAC on the January census. The use of this funding will be identified in consultation with the young person and their parents.

## **Exclusions**

Bledington Primary School recognises that CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a CIC/LAC/PCIC/LAC is at risk of exclusion, the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. Consultation with social workers, the Virtual School and other relevant parties will be important in identifying strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

If an exclusion is unavoidable, the reintegration meeting should consider all possible measures and resources that provide support and prevent further exclusions.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy which reflects the support needed for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.

## **Confidentiality**

Many CIC/LAC do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel different. We will maintain and respect the child's confidentiality in consultation with the social worker, carer, young person, and other parties. Once this has been agreed, complete confidentiality is to be maintained and information on CIC/LAC will be shared with school staff on a "need to know" basis.

All staff will do their utmost to maintain the child's confidentiality e.g. avoiding reference to their care status/PEP meetings in front of their peers.

### **Links with other agencies**

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC, such as Social Care teams; virtual schools, Educational Psychology, health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body**

All governors should be fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.

The governing body will appoint a named governor for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC. The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and DT as the named staff responsible for implementing this policy.

The named Governor should:

- ensure the school has a coherent policy for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC that is regularly reviewed in light of the relevant statutory guidance and that other school policies support their needs.
- ensure that the school has a DT, and that the DT has the necessary time, resources and training to be able to carry out his or her responsibilities.
- ensure CIC/LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- allocate resources to meet the needs of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC

The governing body should receive an annual report setting out:

- The number of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC students on the school's roll.
- Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- Their progress and attainment, as a discrete group, compared to other pupils.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions.
- The destinations of CIC/LAC pupils who leave the school.

The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

## **Head Teacher**

The responsibilities of the Head Teacher are:

- To identify a DT for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC. NB it is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the DT leave the school or be absent.
- To support the DT in carrying out his/her role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on CIC/LAC.
- To ensure that the DT has received appropriate training and has the necessary time and resources to carry out the role.
- To ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of CIC/LAC and ensure strategies are in place to address any concerns in these areas.
- To report on the progress, attendance and behaviour of CIC/LAC to all parties involved.
- To ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support appropriate provision for individual CIC/LAC.
- To ensure that all staff receive relevant training about the needs of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

## **Designated Teacher**

Government Guidance says that the DT should be *“someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy shares and supports high expectations for them.”*

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Understand the role of carers, social workers and other relevant parties, be the named contact for them and maintain regular communication with them.
- Understand the role of virtual schools and respond promptly to requests for information.

- Act as an advocate for CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC in order to maintain high aspirations, allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances
- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the PEP to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition to a new school or phase of education and ensure the speedy transfer of information.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the child's PEP and lead in promoting their educational achievement. This includes monitoring academic progress and attendance, and ensuring the necessary support is in place to meet the child's learning, social and emotional needs. This may involve working closely with other key members of staff e.g. the SENCO
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC children learn and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- Ensure that each CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC has an identified key adult that they can talk to at school.
- Ensure that children are able to discuss their progress and are involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of the CIC/LAC in school, ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required on a strictly 'need to know' basis and reporting annually to governors, maintaining confidentiality of all CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life and encourage CIC/LAC to join in extracurricular activities and out of school learning.
- Be aware that many CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC say they are bullied, so actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Attend training as required and keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding CIC/LAC.

**All staff should:**

- Be aware of the impact of trauma (including abuse, neglect, loss and separation) on children's development and their ability to build relationships, and how this might affect their behaviour.

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC, as for all students and work to ensure they achieve stability and success at school.
- Understand how important it is to see CIC/LAC and previously CIC/LAC 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 CIC/LAC or previously CIC/LAC status.
- Use effective classroom strategies to meet the needs of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC and be aware that some curriculum content may trigger difficult emotions, such as schoolwork on “family”.
- Keep the DT informed about CIC/LAC and previously CIC/LAC children’s progress, respond promptly to requests for information and discuss any concerns about barriers to learning (including bullying).
- Appreciate the central importance of the CIC/LAC child’s 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.
- Engage with relevant training that is offered to enable them to work effectively with CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC.

**Links to other policies** <http://www.bledington.gloucs.sch.uk/policies/>

The needs of CIC/LAC and PCIC/LAC should be kept in mind in all other policies including (but not exclusive to):

- Pupil Premium Policy (Differentiation between Pupil Premium for FSM, Forces’ children, PCIC/LAC, and CIC/LAC)
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- Anti-bullying and hate crime policy
- Exclusions
- Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement.

End





