



# SUMMERHILL INFANT SCHOOL

*Inspiring, nurturing and supporting each child, every day to develop citizens for the future. Our School lays the foundation for a lifetime love of learning*



## CHILD IN CARE POLICY

### Document Summary

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Three: Definitions and complaints procedure Roles and Responsibilities Sources of guidance and support
<b>On School Website?</b>	Yes

### Amendment History

Version	Amendment Date	Pg Num	Amendment Summary
2.0	November 2024	1	<b>Child Looked after amended to Child in Care in line with Bristol CC Safeguarding guidance)</b>
2.0	November 2024	2	<b>Amendment of LAC to CiC</b>  <b>Pupils who have been looked after amended to have been in the care of a local authority</b>
2.0	November 2024		<b>All reference to LAC replaced by CiC (Children in Care)</b>



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## Statement of Intent

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for CiC and children who have previously been in care (PLAC) are of real concern. Pupils who have been in the care of a local authority often require additional support and attention in order to improve their situation.

Summerhill Infant School endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our pupils.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for children in care and previously children realistically and use the school's resources efficiently to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

## Overall aims

We at Summerhill Infants will do for Children in Care (CiC) and Previously (PLAC) what we do for all children only more so. We aim to ensure that children in care excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what children who are in the care of or have previously been in the care of a local authority tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means including the Children in Care Council and surveys from The HOPE, Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care.

Summerhill Infants School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.



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## **Objectives**

*Summerhill Infants will support children looked after by:*

- ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll
- balancing support with real challenge through a balanced a broad-based education
- ensuring that each child has a high-quality Personal Education Plan which is reviewed every three months with their carer, the Designated Teacher, their Hope School Advocate and their Social Worker
- linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- ensuring there is a Designated Teacher to advocate for the rights of looked after children.
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- developing strong relationships with carers, social workers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies
- encouraging and supporting children in care to take responsibility for their learning
- engaging children in care and previously looked after children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions for all children in care
- giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each child in care and previously looked after child so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- planning for future transitions e.g. to Junior Academy.

## **Roles and responsibilities – see appendix 2 for full detail**

The Governor with special responsibility for children looked after in this school is: Paul Hampson

The designated teacher in this school is: Jane Edwards

## **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

All looked after children must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through



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a meeting involving the young person, Carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care. If the young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP. Full guidance on PEP meetings and how to use the PEP is provided on the [CiC education web pages](#).

### **Additional funding**

Children in care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible children on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 2 is currently called Pupil Premium Plus

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care expects 80% of Pupil Premium Plus money to be spent on improving outcomes in English and/or maths.

### **Admission/Induction Arrangements**

Children in Care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the statutory guidance on school admissions. On admission to the school or to care, carers will be given a School Prospectus about the school's expectations and processes and the child and carer will meet with the designated teacher for children in care. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly, we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care, the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared as soon as possible in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.



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At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

Many children in care and previously looked after children do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

### **School Trips and Special Activities**

At Summerhill Infant School we aim to ensure that children in care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Given the delays that children in care experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that children in care enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

### **Leaving Arrangements**

When a child in care leaves the school, we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.



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## Appendix 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and child in care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC in line with Bristol Safeguarding in Education team guidance

“Children in Care (CiC) ” are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children’s residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

“Previously LAC (PLAC)” are defined as:

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from ‘state care’ (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

## Legal Framework

This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) DfE February 2018.

## Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of governors.



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Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Headteacher's response.

- Pupils who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for children in care through Reconstruct and encouraged to look at the page on Bristol's Children in care or previously looked after children **website**:

**<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/schools-learning-and-early-years/children-in-care-or-previously-looked-after-children>**



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## Appendix 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

### *The Role of the Governing Body*

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training.
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CiC and PLAC with Special Educational Needs and Disability or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for children in care). A suggested template is available on this web page: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/information-for-schools>.
- The governing body, Headteacher and senior leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
  - the school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC and PLAC on roll;
  - the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC and PLAC ;
  - resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC and PLAC.

### *The role of the Headteacher*

- To ensure that, in partnership with the governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in care.
- To make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting CiC and PLAC to achieve.
- In partnership with the governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher.
- Oversee the development of the policy on CiC and PLAC.
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and PLAC and report these termly to the governing body and discuss them at Core SIO/HOPE meetings.
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc. that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support CiC and PLAC..



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## *The role of the designated teacher within the school*

The designated teacher (DT) has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how CiC and PLAC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how LAC and PLAC learn
- promote the educational achievement of every CiC and PLAC on the school's roll
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put CiC and PLAC at a disadvantage
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support CiC and PLAC learning
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Quality First teaching
- make sure that CiC and PLAC are prioritised for academic support and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all CiC and PLAC and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how CiC and PLAC learn and achieve
- ensure that the school file for CiC and PLAC holds all the essential information; a template for which can be found on the [CiC education web pages](#)
- arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each CiC and PLAC on the roll of the school
- have due regard for the 'Expectations' document produced by The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care.

## *The role of all those involved in supporting CiC and PLAC*

- Ensure that all CiC and PLAC are made to feel welcome and included.
- Have high expectations of CiC and PLACs involvement in learning and educational progress.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a CiC or PLAC's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children.



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- Understand how important it is to see CiC and PLAC as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers.
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a CiC and PLAC's status.
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.



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## Appendix 3 - Sources of guidance and support

### National policy/statutory guidance

- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools](#) - DCSF 2009
- [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) - DfE 2018
- [Promoting the education of looked after children](#): statutory guidance for local authorities – DfE 2018
- [Department for Education website](#)
- [Pupil Premium information](#)

Bristol policies and guidance – all available at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/guidance-policies-and-procedures> unless otherwise shown

- Admissions protocol and operational process
- Attendance plan for CiC and PLAC example
- Exclusion Procedural Guidance
- Induction and leaving processes for children in care (CiC and PLAC)
- Model confidential school file for CiC and PLAC - Some schools requested a template of what a school's file for aCiC and PLAC should contain. Several designated teachers contributed to this model document
- Model policy for CiC and PLAC for primary schools - This is intended to be a template for primary schools to adapt according to their own circumstances
- [Personal Education Plan Guidance](#)
  - Glossary for PEP guidance
- Process for agreeing part time timetable
- Process for new CiC and PLAC moving
- [Pupil Premium policy](#)
- [When a child comes into care Guidance for schools on social care processes when a child comes into local authority care](#)
- Children in care or previously looked after children [website](#):

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/schools-learning-and-early-years/children-in-care-or-previous-looked-after-children>

School's own policies e.g.

- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSHE & Citizenship
- Emotional Literacy policy
- Learning and Teaching
- Confidentiality
- Single Equality Scheme (inc. DES, GES, RES)
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding Children Policy