

ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

The Governors and staff at The Royal Alexandra and Albert School are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment, promoting equality and diversity and ensuring the well-being of all members of the community. It is their clear intention to promote good behaviour and to exercise their responsibilities in ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils and staff within the community.

The policy applies to **all** staff & pupils

Governors' Committee Responsible: Pupil Matters Pastoral Committee

Governor Lead: Julie Sherlock

Nominated Lead Member of Staff: Emma Glover; Assistant Head, Inclusion.

Status & Review Cycle: Annual

Last Action	Approval by Pupil Matters Pastoral Committee	8 th November 2016
Next Action	Review by Designated Teacher	October 2017

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KEY PERSONNEL

The Headmaster is: Mark Dixon

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The Designated Teacher (DT) is: Emma Glover

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The Deputy Designated Teacher is: Carla Sheldon

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The Nominated Governor is: Julie Sherlock

TERMINOLOGY

Children in Care refers to a child who is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. The term 'Looked After' is also used to define the same group of young people.

Virtual School - The Virtual School does not exist in real terms as a building, and children and young people do not attend. It is a service provided by dedicated professionals within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate whose work is to promote and co-ordinate educational support for Children in Care and Care Leavers to succeed at nursery, school, college and university; wherever their place of learning.

A **Designated Teacher** is usually the head teacher or other member of a school's senior management team who is responsible for the educational achievement of any Children in Care in their school.

A **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a school based meeting to plan for the education of a Child in Care. The government have made PEPs a statutory requirement for children in care to help track and promote their achievements.

Governing Body refers to The Governing Body and the Board of Management of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Pupil includes every pupil/student at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

1. INTRODUCTION

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 (PEP) 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 term.

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 reach their full potential’. The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles:



The role of a Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care is now statutory for every local authority.

Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all Children in Care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision.

2. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- 2.1 The school 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.
- 2.2 The school will appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care.
- 2.3 The school will empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities. (This will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and governors in the school).
- 2.4 The school will 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. (A young person's ability to engage in learning can be undermined by feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem – being or becoming 'in care' has a major impact on children's lives).
- 2.5 The school will recognise the particular circumstances of Children in Care and provide for these in all other school Policies and the school's Development Plan.
- 2.6 The school will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for, individual children.
- 2.7 The school is committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of Children in Care.

3. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

- 3.1 To have high expectations of Children in Care's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- 3.2 To 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.
- 3.3 To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- 3.4 To act as an advocate for Children in Care.
- 3.5 To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Children in Care.
- 3.6 To promote the involvement of these children in the co-curricular programme.
- 3.7 To 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.
- 3.8 To 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.

- 3.9 To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- 3.10 To provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- 3.11 To present regular Reports to School Governors, including an Annual Report.
- 3.12 To access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement).
- 3.13 To cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

4. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

- 4.1 To be aware of the Children in Care and where appropriate, be familiar with their educational needs.
- 4.1 To have high expectations of Children in Care's involvement in learning, educational progress and personal development.
- 4.2 To ensure that Children in Care are supported sensitively.
- 4.3 To respond positively to a request to attend training specifically aimed at supporting Children in Care.
- 4.4 To respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- 4.5 To promote the self-esteem of Children in Care; maintain confidentiality and ensure that no Child in Care is stigmatised in any way.

5. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- 5.1 The governing body will appoint a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations.
- 5.2 The governing body will ensure the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- 5.3 The governing body will monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of Children in Care.
- 5.4 The governing body will ensure all governors are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care.
- 5.5 The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of the role, governing bodies should, as a minimum, receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher.
- 5.6 The governing body will 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 Children in Care to achieve at least two levels of progress within a key stage.
- 5.7 The governing body will scrutinise the schools admission procedures to ensure students are admitted as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.

5.8 The governing body will champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teacher on a more regular basis. The governing body may choose to identify a nominated Governor for Children in Care.