



Court de Wyck Church of England Primary School

Bishops Road
Claverham
Bristol
BS49 4NF

Headteacher: Mr N. Riddiough

Email: courtdewyck.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk

FORMAL DOCUMENT

Gov. Ref. No. 15

Topic: Looked After Children		Document Type: Policy		
Related Documents and links to Every Child Matters agenda:				
Date of current Review: Autumn 2008		Reviewed by (position): Headteacher		
Name: Gary Wilsher		Signature: R. Dew Clerk to Governors		
Frequency of reviews: Yearly		Date for Next Review: Autumn 2009		
Recommended time of year for review: Term 1			Legal Requirement? No	
Document History:				
Issue Number	Author/Owner	Date Modified	Date Approved by Governors	Comments
1	Headteacher	16/9/2008	16/9/2008	New Policy

Looked After Children Policy

Looked After Children Policy

The objectives of this Policy:

The Governing Body of Court de Wyck CofE Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all our pupils.

We recognise that, nationally, Looked After Children (LAC) have significantly underachieved compared with their peers. We intend, through this policy, to promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after children at Court de Wyck.

The Governing Body is committed in particular to implementing the North Somerset Guidance for Raising Academic Achievement of Looked After Children available at

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/education . This sets out six principles:

- ü prioritising education;
- ü having high expectations;
- ü promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes;
- ü achieving stability and continuity;
- ü early intervention and priority action; and
- ü listening to children.

DCSF Guidance www.dcsf.gov.uk introduced two key measures to improve the educational life chances for children in public care:

- ü Designated Teachers, appointed by the governors, for every school.
- ü Personal Education Plans for all pupils in public care.

The Governing Body will ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is able to carry out his or her responsibilities effectively.

The Designated Teacher has a key role to play here but we need to remember that all staff and all Governors have important and complementary parts to play as well.

The role of the Designated Teacher:

DCSF Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen ... [who] should be an advocate for the young people in public care, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them."

Our Designated Teacher will:

- ü Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer.
- ü Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed as soon as possible (and within 20 days of the pupil joining the school.)
- ü Ensure that the Personal Education Plan and other records are kept up to date, and available in time to inform review meetings.
- ü Ensure that each Looked After Child has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role should be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the schools Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- ü Co-ordinate any support that is necessary within school.

- ü Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- ü Encourage pupils in public care to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- ü Ensure as far as possible attendance at planning and review meetings.
- ü Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training, and act as an advisor to staff
- ü Act as an advisor to Governors.
- ü Set up urgent meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- ü Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and - if the pupil changes school - to a new school.

The responsibilities of all staff (teaching and non-teaching):

All our staff will:

- ü Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of young people in public care.
- ü Ensure that all Looked After Children are supported sensitively.
- ü Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- ü Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- ü Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- ü Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children; maintain confidentiality; and ensure that no Looked After Child is stigmatized in any way.

The responsibilities of the Governing Body:

The Governing Body will:

- ü Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities.
- ü Support the Head, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Looked After Children are recognised and met.
- ü Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance on the education of Looked After Children.
- ü Nominate a Governor to take a special interest in this area of the school's work.

Responsibility of the nominated Governor:

The Nominated Governor will liaise with the Designated Teacher and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- ü The number of looked-after pupils in school (if any).
- ü Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- ü Their SAT scores as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
- ü The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
- ü The destinations of pupils who leave the school.

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

The Nominated Governor will also ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give looked after children equal access in respect of:

- ü Admission to school
- ü The National Curriculum and public examinations
- ü Additional educational support where this is needed.

Ü Extra curricular activities

Training:

The Headteacher/ the Designated Teacher will ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Related Policies:

Looked After Children will be considered when reviewing all policies

This policy was agreed and adopted at a Governors' Meeting held on *16th September 2008*

The policy will be formally reviewed in *Term 1 2009-10 school year*

The legal status of looked after children (LAC)

It is important that you know the legal status of your pupils in care. There are two main routes into care.

a) Care Order

A child may be subject to a Care Order, an order at a Court, where a child or a young person is shown to be suffering significant harm. Care Orders come under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and a child who comes into care in this way may be referred to as coming into care under Section 31. The Care Order may be an interim Care Order to begin with, which is then subsequently made a full Care Order after a sometimes lengthy court process. In both these cases, parental responsibility is shared between Social Services and the child's parents. However, the Local Authority has the right to determine the extent of parental involvement.

The Social Care Department has a duty to work in partnership with parents, to involve them in decision making and give them information on their child. However, there are some cases where parents will not be involved, but this should be the exception, rather than the norm. Social Care may recommend to the Court that there be no contact between the parents and the child (although they may still receive information).

b) Accommodated

A pupil may be accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989; often just referred to as 'Section 20'. This means that their parents have asked for them to be taken into care, because for one of a number of reasons they cannot look after them. This could be because of parents' serious illness, or their difficulties in parenting. In this case parents keep responsibility and it is important for schools to be aware of this.

Parents should be involved in decisions around education. They should be given school reports and information if the child is having problems or is doing well in school.

Research has shown that the majority of children who come into Local Authority care swiftly return to their families – nearly half are looked after for less than eight weeks, and two out of three return home in less than six months. It is, therefore, important that schools are aware of continuing vital links with parents. This is why it is important to know what the status and position of the parents is, in relation to decisions about the child's education and general welfare.

c) Residence Order

Sometimes Residence Orders are granted under the Children's Act Legislation, to members of the wider family or friends who are involved in the plans for the care of the child or young person. Grandparents, aunts and uncles may have a formal role in this way. They too have a responsibility in ensuring that the child's educational needs are met. They need to receive, or give, relevant information. **These children are not looked after.**

If in doubt about the child's legal status or who should receive information, please clarify this with the Foster Carer and/or Social Worker as soon as possible and record on the first page of the child's Personal Education Plan.

d) Freed For Adoption

As a result of recent Government Policy, more and more children are now being adopted. The interim process, between being in care and having a full adoption order is called "Freed for Adoption".

There may well be children coming into school from outside the Authority, who are placed for adoption with a family in the school community.

Adoption is surrounded by confidentiality and if adoptive parents wish their adopted child to start at school with a 'clean slate' you may never know they are adopted. If adoptive parents confide with you about the child's status, but wish it not to be generally known among your staff, then you must comply with their request. However, adoptive parents and their supporting agencies are more and more recognising that the majority of adopted children come with the same background of neglect and abuse that they had while in care and will need continuing, enhanced support. Where this is the case, adoptive parents are encouraged to be open with the school and seek help from the local LA's Support Services.

Adoptive parents can retain a link with the Support Social Worker from the original Authority for many years after the adoption has taken place. More often they may come to an arrangement with the local Social Care Department and have a North Somerset Support Social Worker allocated to them from North Somerset's Adoption and Fostering Team.

Technically a child placed for adoption is still in care to their placing authority. That Authority should ask you to complete a Personal Education Plan.

In practice, for the reasons outlined above, placing Authorities may not want to, or find it difficult to do this. However, being placed for adoption in a new area with a new family and a new school must be one of the most significant transitions in a child's life. Good practice for you as the receiving school is to call a meeting at least with the adoptive parents and relevant support agencies in North Somerset to draw up a Personal Education Plan to meet that child's needs during transition to adoption and settling down in your establishment.

e) Adoption Order

This is the end point of the adoption process. The adoptive parents take on full parental rights and the child ceases to be looked after.