CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN POLICY

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1. Definition

We have used the umbrella term of Care Experienced Children as this encompasses “Looked after Children” (CLA) and children who may have returned home or who have been adopted having previously been looked after.

For the purposes of this policy a child ‘looked after by a local authority’ is one who is looked after within the meaning of S76 of the SSWBA Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children).

A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to whom the child is to live with, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales.

Goytre Fawr Primary School recognises that Care Experienced Children may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty in some situations and scenarios. In this policy, we will use the term Care Experienced Children to refer to children who have ever been subject to a care order. This will include adopted children or children who have ever been on the ‘LAC register’, even if they have been removed from the register due to a return to parental care. This is because we recognise children and young people who have experienced being looked after in any circumstance, may need additional care and support.

2. National Research

National research shows that Care Experienced Children significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Their academic and social progress is likely to be affected by their experiences, and compounded by instability in their personal circumstances.

Care Experienced Children on average attain lower levels than their peers at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Key Stage 4. Care Experienced Children are also more likely to be persistent absentees than their peers.

Care Experienced Children are also under represented in further education with just 12% going on to further education compared with 68% of the general population. At Goytre Fawr Primary School we believe in providing Care Experienced Children with the best possible provision to enable them to achieve in line with their peers and prepare them for better future. This is a key priority in our school.

3. Support

At Goytre Fawr Primary School we recognise that Care Experienced Children can experience specific and significant disadvantage within a school setting. We are committed to enhancing the achievement and wellbeing of Care Experienced Children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child, ensuring equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum, and ensuring that they have access to all aspects of school life. We believe that being a complete part of the school is very important for the social and emotional development of Care Experienced Children and they should therefore be encouraged to take a full and active part in any extended school activities;
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of all Care Experienced Children in addition to their health and wellbeing;
- Achieving stability and continuity and developing the self-esteem of Care Experienced Children

which could be achieved, for example, by ensuring that Care Experienced Children participate in positive out of school activities. These activities can help raise the young person's self-esteem through the acquisition of skills which are often transferable to school;
• Promoting school as a positive place to be and encouraging attendance and following up with carers/social worker where there are attendance issues. Where there are concerns Care Experienced Children will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, for these referrals to be prioritised in line with the Local Authority Policy on Care Experienced Children. Any requests for holidays in term time will be discussed with the Local Authority as the school will not support requests by foster carers to take holidays in term time;
• Working with the Local Authority, other agencies, foster carers and children to support children who are in crisis, to avoid permanent exclusions, and to reduce episodes of fixed term exclusions. We will be especially sensitive to exclusion issues where Care Experienced Children are concerned and try every practicable means to maintain the child in school and will seek Local Authority and other professional advice as appropriate;
• Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes;
• Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child;
• Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible;
• Ensuring that the child has the opportunity to speak with someone whenever they wish and that this voice is heard and captured in any relevant documentation and accompanying processes, for example Personal Education Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and care reviews etc.;
• Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Care Experienced Children; for example, we will be sensitive to the individual needs of Care Experienced Children when the school delivers certain aspects of the curriculum such as 'My Family', or designing a card for Mother's/Father's Day. In such instances, the school will think of alternatives so that any potential difficulties can be avoided;
• Ensuring there is an appropriately trained Designated Teacher, who will be responsible for all Care Experienced Children;
• Ensuring all identified as looked after by a Local Authority have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) completed by the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which identifies the child's individual needs and the support they require. PEP meetings are to be organised by social workers / IROs and completed PEPs will be shared with the school by the child's social worker. Where Care Experienced Children have additional educational needs due to developmental delay, incurred as a result of pre-care experiences and sometimes protracted periods out of school, we will ensure that additional support is provided in line with the ALN code of practice;
• Referring to the Educational Psychologist where appropriate for further advice and where appropriate following the Local Authority's statutory processes where it is considered that a care experienced child may benefit from further assessment;
• Supporting Care Experienced Children who experience bullying. Where instances of bullying are reported, we will employ our anti-bullying policies which recognise that support may be necessary for children who show such behaviour as a result of difficult life experiences. Staff within the school are aware that Care Experienced Children may also display bullying behaviour, in addition to being bullied. The school will handle these situations sensitively and where necessary seek advice from colleagues in Social Care and the Directorate for Children and Young People.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Headteacher
• Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for Care Experienced Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or be absent from school.
• Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Care Experienced Children and act where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
• Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Care Experienced Children to all parties

involved.
• Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
• Ensure that any additional funding such as ‘LAC PDG’ is used to good effect, for the benefit of all Care Experienced Children. Provide evidence of how this funding has been spent will be shared the LA / EAS on a yearly basis.

b) Governing Body
• Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Care Experienced Children.
• Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Care Experienced Children.
• Allocate resources to meet the needs of Care Experienced Children.
• Ensure the school’s other policies and procedures are inclusive of the needs of Care Experienced Children.
• Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
• Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Care Experienced Children are recognised and met.
• Receive a report once a year setting out:
- The number of Care Experienced Children on the school’s roll (if any);
- Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils;
- Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils;
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any);
- The destinations of 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.

c) The Designated Teacher

• Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan for Care Experienced Children who are currently looked after by the Local Authority to plan for that transition in consultation with the child’s social worker.
• Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people before the Care Plan review for Care Experienced Children who are currently looked after by the Local Authority.
• Ensure that each care experienced 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.
• Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
• Co-ordinate any support for the Care Experienced Children that is necessary within school.
• Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
• Encourage Care Experienced Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
• Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Care Experienced Children.
• Set up timely meetings with relevant parties if a pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
• Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
• Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education;
• Track academic progress and target support appropriately;
• Promote inclusion in all areas of school life;
• Ensure that attendance is monitored;
• Work closely with staff such as the Wellbeing and Learning Support Office with responsibility for Care Experienced Children to ensure all procedures are being followed and Care Experienced Children are receiving the appropriate levels of support.

d) Staff

• Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Care Experienced Children, as for all pupils.
• Maintain confidentiality and ensure that Care Experienced Children are supported sensitively.
• Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
• Work to enable Care Experienced Children to achieve stability and success within school.
• Promote the self-esteem of all Care Experienced Children.
• Understand the key issues that affect the learning of Care Experienced Children.