Holymead Primary School

Children in Care Offer

At Holymead Primary we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all children. We as a school community aim to be champions for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognizing that we as school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

Our aims to support Children in Care:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Diminishing difference - Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line to those of their peers.
- Making sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identifying our schools' role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- To have a Designated teacher who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

We as a school keep accurate records of how many children are currently in care or have been at some stage during the past year and in which year groups. Pupils access the core offer from the school as well as extra pupil premium plus provision for each child.

- The young person will have a trusted adult within the school who is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- There is information in SIMs in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school.
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of Children in Care and actively promote their best interests.
- Adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status.
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- The Designated teacher ensures that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care.
- The Designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained.

- Holymead Primary supports the engagement of Children in Care in out of school hours learning.
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- Holymead Primary supports carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Teachers help the individual to integrate into the school community and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- Teachers are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.
- Teachers are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.
- The Designated teacher will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- CIC are given access to Pupil Premium funding in school to support literacy and maths and any needs that require support outside of the core offer.

Holymead Primary use best practice to implement the following strategies for children in care:

High expectations

- Holymead Primary celebrates the achievements of Children in Care.
- Teachers have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- CiC are expected to make good levels of progress. If it is recognised that the pupil is not reaching their age related expectations, this will be identified and extra provision will be put in place until the pupil is exceeding expectations.
- Holymead Primary has an expectation that pupils will attend for 96% or more.
- Holymead Primary will work with the virtual schools to raise aspirations and talk about future opportunities.

Ensure strategies for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and have targets they are working towards

- Holymead Primary provides assessment and feedback to help the pupils improve their own learning.
- Pupils are involved in their PEP meetings and contribute to their action plan for the year.
- CiC are encouraged to attend intervention groups and after school clubs and will liaise with foster carers to ensure that the pupils have access to them.

- Holymead Primary recognises that participation and interaction is an important part of learning and will build relationships with the pupil in order to encourage the CiC to actively participate.
- The class teacher will meet the CiC pupil on a regular basis in order to gather the pupil's voice and to help them reflect on their own learning.

Close monitoring of progress

- All teachers of CiC will be made aware of their status. Teachers are aware of their responsibilities towards these pupils.
- Teachers monitor progress using Target Tracker.
- Key staff have a greater understanding of the circumstances for all children in care within their school and monitor across subjects.
- The PEP process is completed a minimum of two times a year, which allows more in depth information to be gathered regarding pupil progress in individual areas.
- The Holymead Primary Designated Teacher will monitor progress as part of the PEP review and monitor the impact of strategies that have been implemented as part of the action plan. If any actions are not having impact or not showing progress another PEP may be held.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities

- Children in care are encouraged to join extra-curricular activities
- Extra-curricular activities are publicised and signposted to foster carers.
- Any reasonable adjustments and support will be made available to ensure that these pupils have access to these activities.

Children in care are not made to feel differently to other pupils

- Children in Care are included in all aspects of school life.
- At Holymead Primary the environment and curriculum is tailored to ensure that different family circumstances are celebrated.
- Mentoring and support is available for all pupils and any pupils who requires extra support is given sensitively to ensure discretion. Pupil's personal circumstances would never be publically discussed.

Early intervention when concerns arise.

- Close communication takes place between the designated teacher and teachers should any concerns occur.
- Due to the close monitoring discussed earlier, if concerns arise, intervention can be put in place quickly and effectively. The designated teacher will take the lead on this if necessary.
- PEPs will be brought forward if necessary and progress meetings will be help between school/carers and any other professionals to address need.
- Any special educational needs / AIM abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made.

- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, then we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews.
- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure will be established. Holymead Primary will inform the Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Virtual schools if any concerns about attendance.
- Staff will acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.
- If a child is on a protection plan, Holymead Primary will ensure Social workers and carers are contacted if child is absent from school.

Involve carers at every opportunity

- The class teacher will liaise closely with carers, birth parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.
- There will be a well-planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented.
- Teachers will communicate regularly with carers.
- Contact will take place between carers and the class teacher at least termly.

Procedures to avoid exclusions for CiC

- Holymead Primary works with carers and other key professional to offer support and guidance to avoid exclusions wherever possible. Holymead Primary will identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Virtual School, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school.
- Where exclusions are necessary, all other routes will be explored first such as the use of alternative provision within the authority.
- Where exclusions happen, Holymead Primary will work with the virtual schools to ensure that relevant support is put in place for these pupils and in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the chair of governors where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education.
- Make sure in the event of any exclusion, contact is made with the Virtual school with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Admissions and transitions:

- The Designated Teacher will ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- Holymead Primary will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known; under data sharing protocols.
- Holymead Primary will make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.
- In the case of planned transitions, the Designated Teacher will arrange for representatives from the new provision to attend the last PEP at Holymead Primary.

Personal education plans (PEPs):

- "The PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school."(Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010)
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (Early years to Yr6) for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan. E.g. New EHCP, Pastoral Support Programme.
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 10 days of starting the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, EHCP).
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Child in Care has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set.
- Hold a PEP meeting for every statutory care review, involving the Social worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate.

The designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this document.

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