

**BISHOPSTEIGNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL  
BISHOPSTEIGNTON PRESCHOOL  
Governing Board**

## Policy for the Education of Children in Care in Schools and Settings

|      |             |                |                                           |               |     |
|------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------|-----|
| Date | 22 Jan 2024 | Responsibility | Teaching & Learning /<br>Inclusion / SEND | Unique<br>I/D | 8-4 |
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| Version Control |                                   |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Version         | Origin                            | Date          | Amendments                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2017            | Devon County Council model policy |               | Review December 2019                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2017            |                                   | January 2019  | Unique I/D added                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2017            |                                   | November 2019 | Approved and adopted at T & L meeting                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2017            |                                   | October 2021  | This policy now meets the requirements of both Bishopsteignton Primary School and Bishopsteignton Preschool.<br>Wrap around Care note added.<br>Approved and adopted at the 15 Oct 2021 T & L meeting |
| 2022            | Devon County Council model policy | Jan 2022      | Policy updated in accordance with DCC model policy.<br>For review and approval at the 28 Jan 2022 T & L meeting                                                                                       |
| 2022            | Devon County Council model policy | Jan 2022      | Page 6: Designated governor is now Pauline Morley<br>For review and approval at the 22 Jan 2024 T & L meeting                                                                                         |

This policy also applies to our Breakfast Club and After School Club which are both based on our school site for current pupils

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## **Bishopsteignton School**

### **Rationale**

At Bishopsteignton School we believe that all Children in Care, and those previously in care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. As a community we aim to be champions for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development. To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations and ambitions;
- Giving them a sense of the control, they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.
- Ensuring the Personal Education Plan is up to date and of a high standard.
- Ensuring they have a trusted adult who they feel they can go to for support during the school day.
- Ensuring they have the best provision the school can offer to help them make good progress in all areas.
- Working closely with the Virtual School, Carers and Social Workers

### **Definition: Who are our Children in Care?**

Most Children in Care will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

### **Definition: Who are our Children Previously in Care?**

A Previously Looked After Child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because he/she is the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order which include arrangements as to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been Adopted from state care outside England or Wales and

A Child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if he/ she is in the care of, or accommodated by, a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation, the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

### **Legal Framework**

- From 1 September 2009 all Governing Bodies were required under the Children's and Young Persons Act of 2008, to appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care.
- The Families Act of 2014 also required all Local Authorities to appoint a Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that the educational achievement of Children in Care was seen as a priority and to ensure arrangements were in place to improve their educational outcomes.
- Previous legislation and guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of Children in Care.
- The 2018 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities which extended some responsibilities to Children Previously in Care but the expectation is that there is a Designated Teacher and the likelihood is that it would be the same person as for Children in Care.

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## **Schools are required to:**

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly-based education for all Children in Care;
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of Children in Care;
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all Children in Care;
- Ensure there is a (qualified) Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all Children in Care who are on the school roll;
- Develop effective systems of communications and protocols;
- Promote the attendance of Children in Care.

## **Objectives**

At Bishopsteignton School to ensure support for Children in Care we will:

- Create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent;
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line with those of their peers;
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Balance high levels of support with challenge and high expectation to ensure rapid progress;
- Have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate) and Social Workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues;
- Work alongside the Social Worker, PEP Coordinator, Area Learning Advocate and other professionals to ensure that each Child in Care has a current, good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and is an effective tool which supports the young person and helps them make excellent progress;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the Personal Education Plan;
- Closely monitor each child's attendance and academic progress, working and sharing information in a timely manner with the Virtual School to help ensure each child achieves the best possible educational outcomes;
- Ensure there is a well-planned and coordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented
- Plan for future transitions effectively including planning for transport.

All staff and Governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures, both within the school and with other agencies.

In addition, we shall:

- Challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff;
- Closely monitor the social and personal progress of all Children in Care;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's Care status and the background and family history of children who are in Care, especially surrounding teaching and

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learning relating to the family;

- Ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies.

In pursuit of this Policy we will:

- Nominate a School Governor to ensure that the needs of Children in Care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher;
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training to support Looked After Children.

## **Admissions and Transitions**

We shall:

- Prioritise the admission of Children in Care, and those who have been adopted who have a Special Guardianship Order, within our own Admissions procedures in order to admit students without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care;
- Ensure that all Children in Care meet the Designated Teacher who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;
- Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Children in Care so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate;
- Meet with the Devon Area Learning Advocate to make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained at the outset;
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition (where the receiving school is made known);
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience;
- Liaise with Carers, previous schools and other professionals to help effectively manage transitions.
- We recognise that Children in Care often need higher levels of transition support and will use the **Devon County Council Transition Guidance** and provide children and young people with the Transition Booklet

## **Attendance (also see our Attendance Policy)**

We shall:

- Implement a first day of absence procedure for all Children in Care whose attendance falls below 95%;
- If school is not using a management system linked to DCC provide weekly updates on attendance of Children in Care to [sarah.short@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.short@devon.gov.uk) using Egress for security;
- Inform the Carer; Area Learning Advocate; Education Welfare service; Social Worker; Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance;
- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

## **Exclusion (See also our Behaviour Policy)**

We shall:

- Aim to use alternatives to exclusion as a sanction for Children in Care, for example, restorative approaches and the Relational Support Plan
- Inform the Virtual Head as soon as there is an exclusion or risk of exclusion.
- Actively follow the DCC Protocol for Reducing Exclusions of Children in Care
- Engage with interventions provided by the Virtual School and the Educational Psychology Service to avoid exclusion, such as the REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon Schools) programme.

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## **Multi-Agency Liaison**

We shall:

- Support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making;
- The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with the Virtual School, carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child'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 clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;
- Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child;
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the parents.
- Our Designated Teacher will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time, to comply with statutory obligations;
- Encourage each of our Children in Care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.

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

We shall:

- Hold a PEP meeting in time for every Statutory Care Review that involves the Social Worker, PEP Coordinator, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate). Additional attendees may include e.g. Careers South West, Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer, Area Learning Advocate
- Ensure the views of the child are central to the PEP meeting and encourage them to attend.
- Welfare Officer, Area Learning Advocate etc. We will seek the views of the child as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance;
- Have a high-quality PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets and has been quality assured by the Virtual School;
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high-quality PEP in place within 20 days of starting at 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, Statement of Educational Need);
- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in the PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Children in Care have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the Child in Care and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan;
- Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) e.g. those who are at risk of under-achieving academically or for extra-curricular activities through discussions at PEP meetings;
- Seek to nominate our Children in Care to DCC for the annual Children in Care Celebration of Achievement Event.

## **School Trips and Special Activities**

We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the Social Worker, sometimes delegated to Foster Carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

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## **Complaints**

If a young person, parent 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 Social Worker.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Governors:**

The name of the Designated Governor for Children in Care is: Pauline Morely.

What every Designated Governor for Children in Care needs to know:

- The number of Children in Care on the school roll;
- The number of Children in Care with up-to-date PEPs and have they been assessed as good quality;
- Overall attainment and progress of Children in Care in the school / performance compared to peers;
- Number of Children in Care with SEN and with an Education Health Care Plan (EHP);
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of Children in Care;
- Number of Children in Care who have had a Fixed Period Exclusion in the previous 12 months;
- If the school is making effective and efficient use of the Pupil Premium for its Children in Care.
- If the school is meeting its statutory duties with respect to the Designated Teacher, (qualifications, experience etc.);
- If the Designated Teacher is provided with appropriate professional development and time to fulfil the role?
- How LA supports educational achievement of Children in Care.

### ***The Governing Board will:***

- Appoint a Designated Teacher in accordance with the regulations published in September 2009; (DCSF, The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies [2009]);
- Ensure the Designated Teacher has opportunity to attend training and that school staff and Governors are aware of the DfE Statutory Guidance;
- Have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 and statutory guidance 2015 (Promoting the Education of Children in Care);
- Appoint a Governor with specific responsibility for Children in Care;
- Take a proactive approach in cooperating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending the school;
- Ensure that Designated Teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Headteacher;
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of, Children in Care.

### ***The Role of the Headteacher:***

- Ensure that, in partnership with the Governing Board, 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;
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting Children in Care to achieve;
- In partnership with the Governing Board, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the Designated Teacher;
- Oversee the development of the policy on Children in Care;

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- Wherever possible allocate Children in Care a Key Worker;
- Evaluate the attainment and progress of Children in Care, discuss them at Senior Leadership meetings and report these termly to the Governing Board and Virtual School.

## **Designated Teacher for Children in Care (see Statutory Regulations from September 2009 & Promoting the Education of Children in Care 2015):**

The name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care is **Dave Killoran**.

The role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Promote the educational achievement of every Child in Care on the school's roll;
- Set up systems to regularly record the achievement of all Children in Care, monitor their attainment and progress and, where progress is not being made, take appropriate actions to support the pupil;
- Ensure effective expenditure of the Pupil Premium Plus funding;
- Ensure the Voice of the Child is heard;
- Build a good working relationship with the Area Learning Advocate from the Virtual School bringing to their attention any concerns;
- Regularly report progress and attainment for every Child in Care to the Virtual School;
- Promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every Child in Care matters and their social, emotional and academic needs are prioritised;
- Facilitate the training of school staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how Children in Care learn and develop;
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Children in Care at a disadvantage;
- Promote a culture in which Children in Care believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- Promote a culture in which Children in Care are able to discuss their progress, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Ensure timely completion and return of the annual teacher Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for each Children in Care;
- Be a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students who are in Care;
- Make sure that Children in Care are prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition or any other initiatives/interventions promoted by the Department for Education;
- Ensure able children are identified and appropriate provision is in place to enable them to reach or exceed their potential;
- Promote good home-school links through contact with Carers and effective communication;
- Work with curriculum leaders to monitor the educational progress of Children in Care and intervene, drawing upon external agency support if required, if there is evidence of under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy or other similar concern;
- Maintain records regarding all Children in Care, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child;
- Establish a specific system for Children in Care with regard to contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speed transfer;
- Have an overview and coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding Children in Care;

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- Maintain and respect confidentiality of all Children in Care and ensure that information is shared on a strictly need to know basis;
- Play an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to statutory reviews of Children in Care as required;
- Serve as a named contact for colleagues in the Virtual School and Social Care and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
- Ensure data requested by the Virtual School for Children in Care is returned on time;
- Ensure that strategies are in place for effective transfers and transitions between Key Stages and Year groups and schools where appropriate;
- Ensure that each child who is in Care has a carefully selected Key Worker, who has preferably, received Mentor training through the Virtual School.

## ***The role of all those involved in supporting Children in Care is to:***

- Ensure that all Children in Care are treated inclusively;
- Have high expectations of Children in Care's involvement in learning and educational progress and ensure that more able children are identified appropriate provision is in place to enable them to reach or exceed their potential;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- Be aware of the reasons which may affect the behaviour of a Looked After Child and understand that this is often a form of communication which may need a more personalised response or intervention;
- Understand how important it is to see Children in Care 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 Child in Care's status;
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, Carers, Social Workers, Area Learning Advocates and, depending on age and understanding, the child him/herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

## **The role of all those involved in supporting Children in Care with Special Educational Needs is to:**

- Quickly identify any Special Educational Needs and ensure appropriate provision will be made;
- Have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this;
- Ensure that if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Care Planning Reviews; dates can be obtained from the Social Worker.

## **Related Documentation**

- [DCC Protocol for Reducing Exclusions of Children in Care \(November 2015\)](#)
- [DfE - Governance Handbook](#)
- [Promoting the Education of Looked After Children July 2014 \( Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities\)](#)
- [DCSF: Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Primary Schools - Guidance for Schools \(2009\)](#)
- [DCSF: Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools- Guidance for Schools \(2009\)](#)
- [DCSF: The Role and Responsibilities of the designated Teacher for Looked After Children - Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies \(2009\)](#)

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- [DCSF, Care Matters: Ministerial Stocktake Report \(2009\)](#)
- [The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011-12](#)
- [DfES: Care Matters - Time For Change\(2007\)](#)
- [DCSF: The Children's Plan - Building Brighter Futures \(2007\)](#)
- [DfES: Supporting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors \(2006\)](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004;](#)
- [Every Child Matters: Change for Children\(2004\)](#)
- [Social Exclusion Report: A Better Education for Looked After Children \(2003\)](#)

The Headteacher and/or Designated Teacher will be responsible for briefing all staff on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

## **Bishopsteignton Preschool**

We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff in our provision are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in our care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Children in Care will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all Children in Care have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken in to the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has an impact on their emotional well-being. Most local authorities do not place children under five with foster carers who work outside the home; however, there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who works. It is not appropriate for a looked after child who is under two years to be placed in a day care setting in addition to a foster placement.

We place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for Children in Care are based on two important concepts: attachment and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives, as the foundation for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and enable the development of positive dispositions for learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

## **Principles**

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- We offer places for two, three and four-year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We will always offer 'stay and play' provision for a child who is two to five years old who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.

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- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer, we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

## **Procedures**

The designated person for Children in Care is the designated child protection co-ordinator **Dave Killoran**.

- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensure that appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of the local authority children's social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting, without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of a placement there is a professional's meeting to determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.

The care plan needs to consider issues for the child such as:

- their emotional needs and how they are to be met;
- how any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
- their sense of self, culture, language(s) and identity – and how this is to be supported;
- their need for sociability and friendship;
- their interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
- how any special needs will be supported.

In addition the care plan will also consider:

- how information will be shared with the foster carer and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
- what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be at the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
- what written reporting is required;
- wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child to return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and
- with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings and fun-days etc alongside the foster carer.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a sufficient relationship with his or her key person for them to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.
- In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support.

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- Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning and development.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- The transition to school will be handled sensitively. The designated person and/or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the child's social worker as detailed in the care plan.