




# Southville Primary School

## Adopted Children Policy

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<b>Signed: (Headteacher)</b>		<b>Date:</b> 31.3.26
<b>Signed: (Chair of Governors)</b>		<b>Date:</b> 31.3.26

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## Our School Values

This policy reflects our core values – we show Care in understanding children's early experiences, demonstrate Courage in addressing complex challenges, nurture Connection through trusting relationships, and use Imagination to tailor responses to each child's unique needs.

## Recognising and meeting the needs of permanently placed children

Adopted children will have experienced grief and loss and many of them will have had traumatic experiences in their early lives; 70% of those adopted in 2009–10 entered care due to abuse or neglect. Their needs do not change overnight and they do not stop being vulnerable just

because they are in a loving home. Their experiences in early life can have a lasting impact which can affect the child many years after adoption. We therefore believe that teachers and schools have a vital role to play in helping these children emotionally, socially, and educationally by providing specific support, to raise their attainment and address their wider needs. (DfE 2014)

## **Our Aims**

As a school we take seriously our key role in supporting children who have had difficult starts in life. This policy describes how we as a school, support children who are previously looked after (i.e. living with adoptive families or special guardians).

We want all previously looked after children at our school to feel safe, be happy, and learn and make progress.

We ensure that this is happening by carefully monitoring their progress, including their social and emotional needs, mental health and wellbeing, and learning, taking action and responding to their needs.

## **Relationships and Responsibility**

We recognise that the nature of developmental trauma means that most adopted children have been deeply hurt in the early relationships, which affects how they form later relationships.

There is a complex web of relationships in schools – between children, staff and parents. The whole family of Southville staff are here to care for your child. Our value of Connection guides us to build deep, trusting relationships. All staff will complete trauma and attachment training.

## **Who has specific responsibilities?**

### **Key adult**

The Key adult will be trained in trauma and attachment, prior to or soon after becoming involved with the previously looked after child. The key adult's role is to be the child's safe base at school, meeting the child's needs for availability, sensitivity, acceptance, cooperation and membership.

**Availability** – so the child can learn to trust

By – providing the children with regular, predictable 'attachment time', which is built into the child's daily or weekly timetable

**Sensitivity** – so the child can understand and manage their feelings and behaviour by tuning in with genuine curiosity to the child's feelings, thoughts, needs and wishes

**Acceptance** – so the child can develop their self-esteem

By – naming and accepting the different 'parts' of the child, including the parts that seem contradictory, like 'your silly part, 'your working hard part', 'your sad part', and 'your kind part'.

**Cooperation** – so the child can feel effective

By – negotiating within clear boundaries

**Membership** – so the child can feel they belong

By – helping the child to feel included in other groups and teams, such as their class, clubs, intervention groups, and in the school as a whole, by being acknowledged at assembly or representing the class at the school council. This helps build a sense of Connection and belonging, affirming the child's identity and place within our community.

This person could be a Learning Support Assistant, Emotional Literacy Support Assistant or other adult. It is important to honour the child's choice but take into account the adult's availability, remit and skills.

## **The Team Around the Child**

The next layer of relationships is the team of adults around the child and family and the connection they build.

### **The Class Teacher**

- Uses trauma-aware approaches day to day in their classroom
- Takes Care to not use non-trauma aware approaches
- Identifies and plans for curriculum hotspots
- Adapts and differentiates the curriculum, using Imagination in lesson design
- Monitors progress
- Organises interventions and targeted support
- Works with the designated teacher to support the coordination of provision, to ensure all children get a consistent, high quality response to meeting their needs in school
- Arranges Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) meetings and completion of the document
- Tracks progress against objective/actions set out in the EPAC

### **In class Learning Support Assistants (LSA)**

Following the guidance of the class teacher, the teaching assistant may provide in-class targeted support for your child, usually in small groups or 1:1 if necessary. This will be to support their social and emotional needs, mental health and wellbeing, and learning.

### **Learning Support Assistants (LSA)**

Following the guidance of the class teacher, a learning support assistant (LSA) may work with your child outside the classroom 1:1 or in a small group pre and post teaching, or following an intervention programme. This will be to support their social and emotional needs, mental health and wellbeing, and learning.

LSAs will also work with particular children, usually those children with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. This will be working with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and will usually be following the advice of external professionals. These children will often have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Please see SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

## The Designated Teacher (DT): *Mrs Catherine Moody*

We have a Designated Teacher with lead responsibility for children in care, and adopted and other permanently placed children. The DT acts as a key contact for families and coordinates the support and provision. The Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure that the teachers and all staff keep you informed and involved in supporting your child's development.
- Work with the wider leadership team to ensure high quality teaching in class for all children.
- Liaise with professionals who may come into school to support your child's development and/or supporting referrals seeking additional external support.
- Provide specialist support for teachers and support staff in school so they can help your child and all children to achieve their potential.
- Support the writing and maintenance of the EPAC.
- Organise training for staff so they are aware and confident about how to support the needs of your child and others within the school.
- Provide expert advice and guidance (training and coaching) to all staff working with your child and others within the school.
- Co-ordinate diagnostic assessment.
- Work with class teacher and wider leadership team to co-ordinate and plan intervention groups.
- Co-ordinate input for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Co-ordinate provision with Family Liaison Worker.
- Co-ordinate with the Governing Body ensuring it is kept up-to-date about children in care and adopted children.

Please contact Catherine by telephoning the school for an appointment or via email – [sencosouthvillep@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:sencosouthvillep@bristol-schools.uk)

## Family Support: *Mrs Paula Mathias*

- Provides emotional and practical help and advice to families who are experiencing long- or short-term difficulties.
- Paula has a wealth of knowledge and experience and can meet with children to talk through their worries.

## The Head Teacher: *Mr Andy Bowman*

- Responsible for managing all aspects of the school on a day-to-day basis, this includes children in care and adopted children.
- Ensures the pastoral team know which children are in care, adopted and if SEND provision is being made.

- Ensures those responsible for academic achievement and progress know which children are in care or adopted and are confident about how to support their needs.
- The Head Teacher delegates responsibility to the DT and class teacher/wider leadership team but is still responsible for ensuring that your child's needs are met and they are making the best possible progress.
- The Head Teacher will make sure the Governing Body is kept up to date about all issues in the school including looked after and adopted children.

### **The Deputy Head Teacher (Pastoral): *Mr Gareth Potter***

- Works with DT to ensure all children get a consistent, high quality response to meeting their needs.
- Works with the wider leadership team to ensure high quality teaching in class for all children
- Provides specialist support for teachers and support staff in school so they can help your child and all children to achieve their potential
- Facilitates training for staff so they are aware and confident about how to support the needs of your child and others within the school
- Provides expert advice and guidance (training and coaching) to all staff working with your child and others within the school
- Works with DT and wider leadership team to co-ordinate and plan intervention groups

### **Governor for Children in Care and Adopted Children: *Mrs Jennifer Gibson***

- Meets termly with designated teacher (DT)
- Liaises with the DT on an annual report for the governing body

## **Universal Support**

Universal Support is standard and inclusive practice (early years) and quality first teaching (primary) that includes teaching and practice that benefits all children as well as making reasonable adaptations to support additional needs. This provision is set out in the Bristol Graduated Response document.

### **Universal Support** Examples of High-Quality Teaching

- Identify child's strengths and celebrate successes.
- Highly focused lesson design with sharp learning objectives.
- High demands of pupil involvement.
- High levels of interaction for all pupils.
- Appropriate use of questioning, modelling and explaining on the part of the teacher.
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups.
- An expectation that pupils will accept a level of responsibility for their own learning and work independently.
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.
- Pre and post teaching to prepare the child for a lesson, and revisit learning afterwards.
- Extra reading session.
- Chunking lessons, providing visual prompts, using lesson specific language.
- Coloured overlays if appropriate.
- Enlarged text/exercise books.

## **The needs of previously looked after children**

We recognise that previously looked after children may have additional needs in the following areas.

- Settling to learn, because they may find it difficult to feel safe.
- Building and maintaining relationships with peers.
- Coping with change and transitions (e.g. end of term, end of year, school trips, supply teachers, moving around the school).
- Coping with unstructured parts of the day.
- Managing at triggering times of year (e.g. birthdays, contact with birth family).
- Understanding and managing their feelings.
- Managing their behaviour, which results from emotional needs.
- Curriculum 'hotspots' that may be triggering (e.g. topics related to 'family' or themes of loss or trauma).

We recognise that every child is unique; some children may experience all of these difficulties, while they may not apply to other children. Some children may have more and less settled times during their time at school. We are also aware that children may experience difficulties that we have not foreseen. We acknowledge that parents and guardians know their children best and encourage you to discuss your children's needs with us.

## How we meet these needs

As a school we provide the following support and interventions underpinned by our values of Connection, Courage, Imagination and Care

Support with feeling safe by...

- key attachment relationships
- room providing a 'safe base'

Support with change and transitions by...

- sharing calendar in advance
- endeavouring to warn pupils and parents in advance about key changes
- keeping parents informed about unexpected changes including changes in staffing, illness
- providing good hellos and good goodbyes
- alternative arrangements for coming to and leaving school using a visual timetable to ensure children know what to expect
- using transitional objects and toys
- providing enhanced transition support at end of year transitions, such as extra visits to the next class, spending time with the new teacher, time with the old teacher
- visits during INSET days at the end and beginnings of term
- photos of new classes and staff
- plan and manage ending relationships

Support with peer relationships and social skills by...

- developing play with the external support of OPAL
- training lunchtime staff in setting up and supervising games
- providing social skills groups that explicitly teach and rehearse skills
- providing quiet lunchtime club for pupils who find the playground difficult
- providing a buddy system
- using circle of friends model

Support with the unstructured aspects of the school day by...

- meet and greet to help children settle into the day
- provide activities at the beginning of the day
- providing quiet lunch club for children who need additional support or quieter activities
- providing structure using visual timetables

Support with understanding and managing feelings by...

- whole school use of zones or regulation
- individual and small group zones sessions with LSA

- have an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) to do individual and small group work on emotional literacy
- ensuring adults set the emotional tone and model good emotional regulation
- providing a validating and curious environment in which children can discover how to understand and manage their feelings
- providing play, art, drama or music therapists
- CBT sessions to explore difficulties

Support with managing behaviour by...

- ensuring all staff have a good understanding of trauma and loss and remain open to understanding the reasons underlying difficult behaviours
- time in rather than time out
- trauma informed behaviour policy
- modified behaviour management system for children who do not learn from cause and effect
- understanding the impact of isolation and exclusion on children who have been isolated and excluded in their early lives
- teaching children to develop specific skills, such as managing anxiety, having a voice
- use zones of regulation and sensory input to support behaviour

## Information-sharing

We are aware that information-sharing is complex and may be a key concern for adoptive parents and special guardians. We are also aware that children and young people may have strong views about what they want adults and peers to know or not know. We encourage parents and guardians to share with us the information we need to have in order to understand and support your children. When you share information with us, we will agree with them why, how, and with whom we will share the information within school, based on your wishes.

We will write a provision plan of the child with you. This provides a simple and effective way for you and your child to let others know about their needs and interests. The pen portrait should both document the pupil's needs and celebrate their strengths, giving a brief picture of how they can be best supported in school. It helps us understand subtle behaviours. Other key people in the child's life (e.g. parents, teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, etc.) may wish to help them complete their pen portrait, but it is important that the document remains predominantly from the perspective of you and the child. This brief snapshot of information may be most useful for staff, such as supply teachers and lunch supervisors. The pen portrait should be kept updated as the child's needs, interests, and abilities change.

## **Partnership with Parents**

We endeavour as a school to build strong partnerships with all our parents fostering Connection and Care. Staff are always happy to phone or meet to discuss any concerns. In addition to the regular parent evenings, there are a number of ways we can enhance the communication for permanently placed children:

- Direct email contact with teachers, DT and FLOW
- Agreeing a clear timeline for actions and communication
- Weekly communication with parents
- Updates via home/school communication book or a brief email
- Parent/child support via designated teacher
- Family support via family liaison worker
- Recognise importance of sharing the positive as well as things that have been challenging

## **Education Plan for Adopted Children**

Whilst the education plans are formal documents, our school value of Imagination is drives us to ensure we devise pertinent, tailored support and we take Courageous decisions in order to strive for the best outcomes.

All provision for adopted children is mapped through an Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) as suggested by The Hope virtual school. This document highlights the strengths & needs of the child to create a plan to enhance their education, and to identify good use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding.

Should your child have additional SEND we may also use an Individual Education Plan to map their support, or apply for an Education, Health Care Plan.

You will be offered Team around the Child (TAC) meetings termly, 3 times a year with your child's key adult, class teacher and the designated teacher, plus other adults involved in supporting your child. The meeting in the third term will focus on transition and involve their new teacher too.

## **Priority Admissions**

All children adopted from care in the UK and abroad or leaving care under special guardianship orders have priority admission to mainstream schools. Our school's admission procedures are administered by Bristol City council. Please see their website for more information about this.

## **Pupil Premium Plus**

All school-age children who have left care in the UK and abroad under an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order are eligible for the Pupil Premium Plus. This means that the school receives an annual payment of £2630 (2025-2026) for each eligible child in reception to year 11. This has not been extended to Early Years.

The Department for Education describes this as 'additional funding given to schools to improve the educational and personal outcomes for pupils who have been adopted from care, including (but not limited to) their attainment'.

If you are happy for us to claim the Pupil Premium Plus, you should inform the school about your child's adoptive or special guardianship status and provide supporting evidence.

The Department for Education specifies that: 'The funding is not ring-fenced and is not for individual children – so the Department would not necessarily expect the school to spend £2630 on every child adopted from care on roll at the school. This is partially because a child may have left the school and new pupils may have joined but also because a school is best placed to determine how the additional funding can be deployed to have the maximum impact. For example, a school may decide to train their staff in recognizing and responding to attachment-related issues; or that a particular adopted child needs tailored support that is in excess of the amount the school has received. Alternatively, they may decide that a whole-class intervention is appropriate and that other pupils who attract the Pupil Premium will benefit from this, alongside other pupils who are not deemed to be disadvantaged.

As a school we adhere to the Department for Education's suggestion that schools discuss the measures they are putting in place with parents, and we welcome conversations with parents regarding their children's needs and how the Pupil Premium Plus funding can be used to meet these needs. Parents are invited to contact Catherine Moody regarding these discussions. We are transparent about how we spend our Pupil Premium Plus funding and parents can view our annual Pupil Premium Plus report on our website.

**Funded support may include:**

- Academic interventions delivered by external specialists or school staff
- SEMH support including ELSA, CBT, Zones of Regulation
- Play, music, art, drama therapy
- Assessments including Educational Psychologist, assessments, Occupational Therapists
- Staff trauma awareness training

## **HOPE Virtual School (Helping All Pupils Excel)**

The HOPE, Bristol's Virtual School, exists to improve the education of children in care (CiC) or children who have been in care.

The HOPE's job is to monitor and track how children are doing and put systems, processes, structures and support in place to help them do their best and to support and challenge schools and other agencies to help them do better. The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building. Children do not attend it – they remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled. The HOPE works across Bristol City Council and involves many different departments. They also work with external organisations to try to deliver the best possible education for children and young people in care.

The Hope School runs training for designated teachers for looked after and previously looked after children.

Further information can be found <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/the-hope>

## **Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)**

The adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive, special guardianship order (SGO) and child arrangement order (CAO) families.

The Fund is available for children and young people up to and including the age of 21 (or 25 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health & Care Plan) who have been adopted from local authority care in England or adopted from Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland but living in England. The Fund also includes support for guardians caring for children who were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status.

Until the end of March 2026, the ASGSF will have a single fair access limit of:

- £3,000 per child per year for therapy

Specialist assessments up to the level of £2,500 per child will be considered, but only within the overall £3,000 fair access limit.

This will maximise the number of children who are able to benefit from the ASGSF.

Further advice and application process can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adoption-support-fund-asf>

## **Statutory Guidance**

Southville School, like all schools, is governed by statutory legislation. The following details the key elements affecting Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After children (PLAC).

In February 2018, two key pieces of new Statutory Guidance were published by the Department for Education (DfE)

- Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683561/The\\_designated\\_teacher\\_for\\_looked-after\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

## Further information and support







Different families will need different levels of support and there are plenty of resources available.

Below are just a few that may be helpful:

- Bristol Adoption Support Service (BASS)  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/35032/BASS+Leaflet+2015.pdf/b61747d1-c8c2-4630-b668-9c196f53e0d5>
- <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/adoption>
- <https://adoptionwest.co.uk/>
- <https://ccsadoption.org/post-adoption/>
- <https://www.adoptionsupportcentre.org/>
- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/parenting-rights/adoption-and-fostering>
- <https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/resources/reading>
- <https://www.pac-uk.org/>
- <https://www.parents.com/parenting/adoption/parenting/books-about-adoption-for-kids/>
- <https://www.sendandyou.org.uk/>
- <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/bristol-local-offer>

## Appendix: The Adopters' Year

This details the timetable of events throughout the academic year bearing in mind some of the timings and events may change.

<b>Term 1</b>	September	Inset - parent and child classroom visit 1 <sup>st</sup> EPAC meeting - Teachers to contact families
	October	Parent/Carer evenings with focus on academic progress.
<b>Term 2</b>	Oct/Nov	External training for parents/teachers Attended by Governor
	December	DT/HT/Staff will review actions and amend provision for Term 3
 <b>Christmas Break</b> 		
<b>Term 3</b>	Jan/Feb	2 <sup>nd</sup> EPAC meeting - Teachers to contact families
<b>Term 4</b>	March/April	Parent/Carer evenings with focus on academic progress. DL/HT/Staff will review actions and amend provision for Term 5 this will be sent out to parents/carers
 <b>Easter Break</b> 		
<b>Term 5</b>	May	Parent/Carer evenings with focus on academic progress.
<b>Term 6</b>	June	External training for parents/teachers Attended by Governor
	July	Children will update their provision plan with their new teacher. 3 <sup>rd</sup> EPAC: final meeting the current and new teacher - Teachers to contact families INSET day parent and child visit to new classroom
 <b>Summer Holidays</b> 		

## EQIA Process Summary

<b>Policy:</b>		<b>Adopted Children</b>					
<b>EQIA completed by:</b>		Headteacher and FGB					
<b>Following EQIA, have any potential impacts been identified?</b>							
<b>Yes</b>		✓		<b>No</b>			
<b>Which protected characteristic could be affected?</b>							
Age		Sexual orientation		Gender reassignment		Married/ civil partnership	
Disability		Race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)				Pregnancy/ maternity	
Sex		Experience of care system			✓	Religion or belief	
<b>What evidence has been used to inform the assessment?</b>							
Data		Statistics		Consultation		Survey	
Knowledge of community		✓		Other		[Detail]	
<b>What amendments have been made?</b>							
None required – positive impact identified as Adopted Children have sometimes experienced the care system.							
<b>What further actions/ mitigations are required?</b>							
<b>Monitoring</b>							
Date		No additions required			✓	Additions outlined above	
Date		No additions required			✓	Additions outlined above	
Date		No additions required			✓	Additions outlined above	