

Education of Children in Care Policy

(including those Children Previously in Care)



Approved by: Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director) **Date:** 1st September 2025

Last reviewed on: 1st September 2024

Next review due by: 1st September 2026

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and wellbeing at the heart of all that we do.

1. Guidance and legislation

This policy is written with regard to:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children (DfE 2018)

This policy should be read alongside:

- Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

2. Definitions

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)

- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).

A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating 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 and Wales

A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he 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.

3. Rationale

Children in care and children previously in care are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of these children have suffered a form of abuse or neglect and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. They are more likely to have had a high level of disruption to their education, including low attendance, changes in placements and a lack of support or encouragement with their education. This can result in underachievement leading to poor exam success rates in comparison with all children and fewer children in care and children previously in care progressing to Higher Education or following progression pathways that lead to future economic success and well-being. Children in care and children previously in care are also likely to have emotional difficulties which may affect their opportunities to benefit from teaching and may also result in behaviour which adults find challenging or difficult to manage.

4. This school aims to:

- provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for children in care and children previously in care which enables them to achieve their potential, experience a sense of continuity and be themselves.
- ensure that children in care and children previously in care have full access to the opportunities and support they need to achieve their potential, actively working to remove barriers that may arise to prevent participation.
- have high expectations and aspirations for children in care and children previously in care
- pro-actively intervene at an early stage to address any identified needs.
- monitor the emotional development and well-being of children in care and children previously in care

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors will:

- regularly and systematically monitor and challenge the progress of children in care and children previously in care to ensure that none fall behind or underachieve.
- ensure that children in care and children previously in care are advantaged within school policies, with their needs explicitly considered.

All staff will:

- have high aspirations and expectations and celebrate educational and personal achievements, as with all children.

- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences.
- understand the reasons which may be behind children in care and children previously in care's behaviour and why they may need more support and intervention than other children.
- understand how important it is to see children in care as individuals rather than as a homogenous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers.
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's in care status.
- appreciate the central importance of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child, of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.
- liaise with the designated teacher where a child in care or previously in care is experiencing difficulties – these may be academic, pastoral, behaviour or attendance issues.
- aim to ensure children in care are not disadvantaged when places on trips and extracurricular opportunities arise.

6. The role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will undertake key responsibility for children in care and children previously in care within the school. This designated teacher will consider and act on local and national information on children in care and ensure that all staff have a full understanding of the principles and expectations for children in care and children previously in care

The designated teacher will have knowledge of 'The designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' – statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE – February 2018). This document gives more detailed information around PEPs and the Pupil Premium as well as further detail on aspects of this role.

The designated teacher will undertake training appropriate to the role as required by the local authority (ies) that the school works with.

The designated teacher will:

- establish and maintain an ethos within the school which supports children in care and children previously in care
- work with the Virtual School Head, carers and social workers to promote the education of children in care
- serve as a champion and advocate for children in care and children previously in care and oversee structures and systems that support them.
- for children previously in care, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.
- set up systems to monitor, record and report on the achievements and progress of all children in care and their emotional wellbeing and ensure they have the support they require whilst at school.
- make sure that the young person has a voice in setting their own learning targets.
- Ensure the young person has a trusted adult who they feel they can go to for support during the school day
- facilitate effective communication between all parties both within school and externally.

- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school.
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children making full use of all assessments.
- have up to date knowledge of statutory and good practice guidance for children in care and children previously in care.
- identify signs of potential mental health issues, and know how to access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the local authority support team where applicable.
- Ensure thought is given to the future with relevant careers advice and guidance.
- when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of children in care and children previously in care are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+.
- provide regular reports to the Directors in relation to the progress of children in care.
- Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) if appropriate through discussions at PEP meetings.

7. Admissions

The school will adhere to the provisions of the Admissions Policy to ensure that children in care receive the highest priority for admission to the school and are admitted swiftly to minimise disruption to child's learning.

8. Pupil Premium

There is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of children in care and children previously in care and close the gap between this group and their peers. The school leaders and Directors will monitor the level of pupil premium funding received by the school, the rationale for its spending and the impact on the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- All children in care have a PEP to support personalised learning.
- The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for Children in Care to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances.
- The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school.
- Children/young people should be involved in all aspects of their PEP, according to their age and understanding.
- Where appropriate, the child's parents or relevant family members should be involved in the PEP.
- The PEP should be reviewed each term.
- Where an EHCP is in place, PEP and EHCP are aligned to avoid duplication.

9. Special Educational Needs

We aim to promptly identify and address the special educational needs of all children. We recognise that children in care and children previously in care may need to be given additional consideration due to the impact of possible

previous life experiences, disrupted education and missed schooling. The designated teacher will need to liaise closely and involve carers and /or parents, social workers and other professionals.

10. Suspensions

We recognise that children in care are very vulnerable to suspension and that any suspension can place stress and impact negatively on their placement.

We will

- take active steps to minimise the use of suspensions for children in care.
- Aim to use alternatives to suspension as a sanction for children in care, for example restorative approaches.
- Inform the virtual school as soon as there is a suspension or risk of suspension of a child in care.

11. Record keeping

We recognise the importance of keeping accurate records and that the passing on of records for children in care is paramount for continuity and ensuring that these vulnerable children have key information passed quickly and securely.

12. Review

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant, if you have any comments please email directors@ontrackededucation.com