

Looked After Children / Children in Care Policy



Loving to Learn, Learning to Love

Last updated:	March 2021
Date for Renewal:	March 2022

Overall aims

We at Fishponds Church of England Academy will do for children in care what we do for all children - only more so. As a Church of England Academy, our Christian values are at the core of everything we do. This policy also reflects these values.

Our Vision statement is *Loving to Learn, Learning to Love* and it is this vision which underpins our core purpose and values. As a Church of England Academy, we have established a number of core values and understand that these values need to be lived as well as taught by everyone in our school. We aim to ensure that every child progresses through Fishponds Academy excited about learning and able to fulfil their potential, aiming to overcome any potential barriers to learning. We want our children to develop life skills based upon our 12 core values (*love, patience, truth, hope, justice, forgiveness, courage, generosity, trust, perseverance, kindness, respect*) to enable them to live harmoniously within our diverse and multi-cultural world.

We will support children in care to have the courage to tell us about what they want from their education, to trust us and to listen and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means both in school and more widely including the Children in Care Council and surveys from The HOPE (Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care).

Objectives

Fishponds Church of England Academy will support children in care and previously looked after children by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll;
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
- Ensuring that each child in care has a high quality Personal Education Plan;
- Linking each child to a key person they relate well to;
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies;
- Encouraging and supporting children in care and previously looked after children to take responsibility for their learning;
- Engaging children in care and previously looked after children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities;
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;
- Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each child in care and previously looked after children so that they are not made to feel different from other children;
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

Roles and responsibilities – see annex 2 for full detail

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is: Zoe Faullhurst

The designated teacher in this school is: Phillipa Knowles

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All children in care must have a care plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care . If the young person has an Educational Healthcare Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP. Full guidance on PEP meetings and how to use the PEP is provided on the Bristol City Council CiC education web pages [CiC education web pages](#). The PEP will be drawn up within 28 days of the child being placed into care and reviewed in line with current policy, currently every six months.

PEPs are analysed anonymously by the designated Local Board member for CiC each year to monitor their quality. Each PEP is also submitted to the Hope Virtual School, where they are moderated for their quality. A report reviewing impact and provision for all Children in care is submitted by the designated teacher annually to the Hope Virtual School.

Data and Attendance Information Sharing

Three times a year (terms 2, 4 and 6), updated attendance and attainment data is shared with the Hope Virtual School via the Establishment Portal.

Additional funding

Children in care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible children in care and previously looked after children on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 11 is currently called the LAC Pupil Premium Grant. The appropriate use of allocated funding, including access to interventions, is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. We are mindful that The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care expects 80% of LAC Pupil Premium money to be spent on improving outcomes in English and/or maths.

As of September 2018, previously looked after children will receive Pupil Premium Plus funding. There is no statutory paperwork to outline the use and impact of this funding, therefore the school's policy for distributing PP funding and analysing its impact will come into effect.

For both looked-after and previously looked-after children PP+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The school manages their PP+ allocation for the benefit of the cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children's needs.

The school identifies children that are eligible for PP+ funding on admission to the school or if their care status changes whilst on roll.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Children in care and previously looked after children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the admissions policy set by the Local Board in conjunction with the Academy sponsor. On admission to the school or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and processes in line with all new parents. A meeting will be held between the foster parent and designated teacher and class teacher to explore any specific issues about the child. The child will meet with the designated teacher for children in care if they do not already know them. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. If the child is new to the school, we will always aim to meet the carer/parent and child prior to the child starting school with us. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan, in any case, within 28 days of entry/being placed into care. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly, we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care, the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared as soon as possible in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

Many children in care do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible. We also recognise that previously looked after children and/or their parents may not wish to draw attention to the previous care status. We will endeavor to respect these wishes as far as possible.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that children in care and previously looked after children enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. Activities such as this could be paid for with pupil premium funding. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities for children in care is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Leaving Arrangements

When a child in care leaves the school we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift

transfer of information to the next school. Where appropriate, a member of staff will attend their first PEP at their new setting to aid transition. If the child is removed from care, and placed back with parents and carers, we aim to support the child through ongoing mentoring and support if they remain in our Academy, to ensure their ongoing social, emotional and academic needs are fully met.

Exclusions

Fishponds Academy has distinct values that are taught and referred to regularly. Respect for others features strongly: we protect individuals and our conduct is based on Christian principles that feature in many aspects of social life. Our Academy seeks to be inclusive whenever possible. Poor behaviour may be the result of inappropriate provision, so faced with persistent poor behaviour, as a school, we aim to do our utmost to establish and address the cause rather than applying sanctions to the symptoms. DBAT supports its Academies in using formal exclusion as a behavioural sanction where it is warranted. This is always as a last resort when there is clear evidence that systematic approaches have been tried to modify behaviour without achieving the necessary results.

In the case of any exclusion, the school will engage proactively with the Foster Carer, Social Worker and head of the virtual school. The school will explore all other options for a child in care when they are at risk of permanent exclusion. As with all of our pupils who may have an exclusion, we will consider what further support may be needed or if an alternative placement may be required.

(See the school's Behaviour policy and Exclusions policy for further information).

This policy is dated: March 2021

To be reviewed: annually – next review date: September 2021

Annex 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure

Children in care

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and child in care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Previously Looked After Children

Previously looked after children are those who have been under the care of the local authority for 24 hours but are no longer in the care of the local authority. The children may now be under special guardianship, a child arrangement order or adopted from care.

Legal Framework

The Social Work Act 2017 amends the Children Act 1989, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Academies Act 2010, and is intended to improve decision making and support for 44 looked-after and previously looked-after children.

From 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of children in care who are on the school roll.

The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities 2018, outlines the responsibility for the DT in supporting the educational interests of children in care and previously looked after children. Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children 2018 outlines the statutory duties of the school, local board, DT and virtual school in supporting the educational interests of children in care and previously looked after children.

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer 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 the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Principal, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of the Local Board.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Local Board Member and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Principal's response.

Pupils who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for children in care through Reconstruct and encouraged to look at the page on Bristol's children in care R Voice website www.rvoice.co.uk/pages/home/know-your-rights/right-to-an-advocate

Annex 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Local Board:

- The Local Board will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor / Local Board Member undertake appropriate training;
- Ensure the designated teacher is an experienced member of staff and has the skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Local Board Members will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, PP+ funding for PLAC, CiC with Special Educational Needs and Disability or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for children in care). A suggested template is available on this web page: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/information-for-schools>.
- The Local Board, Principal and senior leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
 - The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC and PLAC on roll;
 - The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC and PLAC;
 - Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC and PLAC;

The role of the Principal:

- to ensure that, in partnership with the Local 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;
- to make sure 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 Local board, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher;
- oversee the development of the policy on children in care;
- evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and PLAC and report these termly to the Local Board and discuss them at Core SIO/HOPE meetings;
- ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

The role of the designated teacher within the school:

The designated teacher has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how CiC and PLAC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC and PLAC learn;
- promote the educational achievement of every child in care and PLAC on the school's roll;
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children in care at a disadvantage;
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support children in care's learning;
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets;
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL);
- make sure that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education

- plan (PEP) within the school;
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and PLAC and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
- have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how children in care and PLAC learn and achieve;
- ensure that the school file for CiC holds all the essential information; a template for which can be found on the [CiC education web pages](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/node/9206) found here: www.bristol.gov.uk/node/9206
- arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each child in care and PLAC on the roll of the school.
- have due regard for the 'Expectations' document produced by The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34260/Expectations+HOPE+Virtual+School+final.pdf/40a49f65-729e-4b59-b8bd-5b06b39dc2cf>

The role of all those involved in supporting children in care and PLAC:

- ensure that all children in care and PLAC are made to feel welcome and included;
- have high expectations of children in care and PLAC's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a child in care and PLAC's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children;
- understand how important it is to see children in care and PLAC 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's care status;
- understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

Annex 3 - Sources of guidance and support:

National policy/statutory guidance (these are web-links accessed in electronic copies of this document)

- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools](#) - DCSF 2009
- [Promoting the education of looked after children](#): statutory guidance for local authorities – DfE 2014
- [Department for Education website](#)
- [Pupil Premium information](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children 2018](#)

Bristol policies and guidance

- [Admissions protocol and operational process](#)
- [Attendance plan for CiC example](#)
- [Exclusion Procedural Guidance](#)
- [Induction and leaving processes for children in care \(CiC\)](#)
- [Information sharing protocol for CiC and care leavers in FE](#)
- [Model confidential school file for CiC](#) Some schools requested a template of what a school's file for a CiC should contain. Several designated teachers contributed to this model document
- [Model policy for CiC for primary schools](#) This is intended to be a template for primary schools to adapt according to their own circumstances
- [Monitoring and Tracking Pupil Progress](#) This document shows the processes that are in place in addition to what schools do
- [Personal Education Plan Guidance](#)
- [Quick guide to PEP meetings](#)
- [Quick guide to who does what](#)
- [Checklist for completing PEP forms](#)
- [Glossary of terms](#)
- [Free resources for CiC](#)
- [Process for agreeing part time timetable](#)
- [Process for new children in care/CiC moving](#)
- [Pupil Premium briefing](#)
- [St Werburgh's Primary School's policy for CiC](#) We have been given permission by St Werburgh's to share their school policy
- [When a child comes into care \(pdf, 15 KB\) \(opens new window\)](#) Guidance for schools on social care processes when a child comes into local authority care
- [Children in care education website](#)

Academy's own policies

- Behaviour policy
- Say no to bullying policy
- Inclusion statement
- Confidentiality
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy

Website links in policy document:

PEP guidance: <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/personal-education-plans>
(see Related documents section)

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children 2018:
[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)

Complaints guidance for children in care:
<http://www.rvoice.co.uk/pages/home/know-your-rights/right-to-an-advocate>

Template for report to full Local Board on the progress of children in care:
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/node/11158>

Model school file for children in care:
<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/node/9206>

Statutory guidance for schools on exclusion (updates September 2017):
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641418/20170831_Exclusion_Stat_guidance_Web_version.pdf