



WEST TOWN LANE
ACADEMY

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WHERE LEARNING IS AN ADVENTURE

Children in Care (CIC) and Previously Looked after (PLAC) POLICY

Date for review: April 2025

Date policy last reviewed: April 2024

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 20 – Children have the right to special care and help if they cannot live with their parents.
Article 21 – Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care
Article 28 - All children and young people have a right to primary education, which should be free.
Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.

RATIONALE

At WTLA we aim to ensure that children in care (CIC) or previously looked after children (PLAC) excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what children tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means. We will work closely with HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for CIC) to ensure the best interests of the child are followed and that sufficient support is provided to ensure the child can reach their potential. This school recognises that CIC and PLAC are likely to have experience of trauma and a high number of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) which may impact their mental health and development. Staff members will have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement for CIC and PLAC, as for all students.

GUIDELINES

WTLA will support children in care 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 whilst also challenging pupils to ensure they work towards achieving their full potential
- ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in line with statutory requirements
- ensuring that PLAC have a high quality Education Plan that is regularly reviewed
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- linking each child to a key person they relate well to (Usually the class teacher, TA or Learning Mentor)

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West Town Lane Academy
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- developing strong relationships with families, carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies
- encouraging and supporting CIC and PLAC to take responsibility for their learning
- understanding that behaviour is communication and using a trauma informed approach
- supporting promptly if concerns emerge such as with mental health, behaviour or attendance
- engaging CIC and PLAC in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- giving integrated but low profile support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- regularly monitor academic progress and attendance and report to relevant parties as required
- planning well for future transitions and changes

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is: Michelle Young

The designated teacher in this school is: Hannah Delaney

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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. This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in "The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children" 2009. This staff member will have the capacity, support and training to complete this role.

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPs)

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are to be updated and reviewed during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. PEPS must be submitted via the online system to meet the Virtual Schools Deadline for funding. All children in care must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. A meeting must be held to review the PEP involving the young person (where appropriate), carers, assigned social worker, designated teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School. If the young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP. The PEP targets must support the academic achievement for the CIC and support their emotional wellbeing. The PEP must work in partnership with local authorities and families.

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.

WTLA is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible children in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to help ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. 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 where appropriate. Children in care benefit from one to one tuition in English and/or Maths, even if they appear to be progressing in line with age related expectations. This school is committed to prioritising all children in care for one to one tuition.

Children who are previously looked after are entitled to additional funding to improve their outcomes and also narrow the gap between them and their peers. In order to receive this funding, they have to have been in the care system, have been adopted, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order. They also have to be named on the school's census as previously looked after. The school will ensure the funding for PLAC is utilised to help the child reach academic outcomes and support their emotional development. EPAC meetings will be held at least twice a year with the designated teacher, guardians and other suitable members of staff to address a need for support and allocate suitable funding.

ADMISSION/INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

Children in care and are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the statutory guidance on school admissions. The Designated Teacher will introduce themselves to the carers (and pupil if appropriate). The Designated Teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practical 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. This 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. The initial PEP after admission will happen within 6 weeks.

SCHOOL TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

At WTLA we aim to ensure that children in care 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. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities 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

Children who are transitioning to secondary school will have extensive support with this move. This will be outlined in the PEP and EPAC meetings during year 5/6 with the appropriate allocation of funds to support this transition.

This policy is dated: April 2024

To be reviewed: Annually by DT/Head teacher

Appendix 1 – Definitions

CHILDREN IN CARE

For the purposes of this policy a child in care (CIC) is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A previously looked after child (PLAC) 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 of England and Wales if s/he is in 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

A special guardianship order (SGO) appoints one or more individuals to be the child's special guardian(s).

A child arrangement order (CAO) settles the arrangements of the persons the child lives with,

Appendix 2

COMPLAINTS

If a carer has a complaint about any aspect of their experience at WTLA this should be raised with the class teacher or DT in the first instance. If this is not resolved then the carer will refer to the WTLA complaints policy (<http://wtl.academy/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Complaints-Procedures-Oct-15.pdf>).

Appendix 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training.
- Governors will receive an annual report from the designated teacher detailing attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CIC with Special Educational Needs and Disability or who are gifted and talented, impacts on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for children in care).
- The governing body, Headteacher 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 on roll;
 - the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CIC;
 - resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CIC.

The role of the Headteacher

- To ensure that, in partnership with the governing body, 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 governing body, 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 report these to the governing body 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 (DT) has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the issues which affect how CIC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CIC learn
- promote the educational achievement of every child in care 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 Quality First teaching
- make sure that CIC are prioritised in one to one tuition arrangements and 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 follow the school system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- act as the named contact for all colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- Ensure that every CIC has regular meetings with the school Learning Mentor
- have due regard for the 'Expectations' document produced by The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care.

The role of all those involved in supporting children in care

- Ensure that all children in care are made to feel welcome and included.
- Have high expectations of children in care's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Promote self-esteem for all CIC and PLAC
- Understand the reasons which may be behind a child in care's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children.
- 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 and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

Appendix 4 - Sources of guidance and support:

National policy/statutory guidance

- Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools - DCSF 2009
- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - DCSF 2009
- Promoting the education of looked after children: statutory guidance for local authorities – DfE 2014
- Department for Education website
- Pupil Premium information

