

**Telford and Wrekin
Virtual School**



Children in Care Policy 2020-2021

Supporting the educational outcomes for
looked after and previously looked after children

Reviewed: July 2020

Next review: September 2021

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Introduction

Newdale Primary School & Nursery believes that in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council as Corporate Parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in Care. We recognise that, educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after and previously looked after children are a real concern. We intend, through this policy, to promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement and support them to achieve at a similar level to all T&W children. Pupils who are looked after and previously looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.

[Newdale Primary School and Nursery](#) endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our pupils. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage pupils to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that pupils enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for looked after and previously looked after children realistically and using the school's resources efficiently in order to ensure the school meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of school life.
- Help pupils develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Working with the wider corporate parenting team we will take an active role in applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression
- Celebrating success.

We recognise that in meeting the needs of Children in Care, we will also be providing the additional care and support many other children also need; the needs of children in care are often those of other children too.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- DfE (2018): [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#)
- DfE (2017): [Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England.](#)
- DfE (2018): [Keeping children safe in education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges \(consultation document\)](#)
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1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- One-to-One Tuition Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Bullying and peer on peer abuse policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

2. Definitions

2.1. **Looked after children (LAC)** are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents (Section 20)
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2.2. **Previously looked after children (PLAC)** are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).
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2.3. **Local terminology**

- Taking into account the views of a large sample of children in care within Telford and Wrekin. The terms children in care (CiC) and children previously in care (CPiC). Hence the terms LAC and CiC are synonymous.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The [governing board](#) is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a coherent policy for CiC and CPiC.
- Reviewing the school's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for CiC and CPiC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring CiC and CPiC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CiC in the school.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the [headteacher](#) regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an [annual](#) basis.
- Providing a nominate governor who should:
 - ensure that a school's self-audit of provision for CiC and CPiC in undertaken.
 - ensure that the schools policies and procedures ensure that CiC and CPiC have at least equal access to all aspects of the school life.
 - Attend meetings organised by the virtual school to provide updates and training to nominated governors.

The Nominated Governor in this school is Mrs J Frost.

4. The virtual school head (VSH) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CiC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CiC and CPiC.
- Working with the school to ensure all within the school CiC are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CiC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of CPiC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:

- Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CiC who are in school settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
- Inform the head teacher and designated teacher if they have a pupil on roll who is looked after by the LA.
- Ensure social workers, schools, designated teachers, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities regarding a pupil's PEP.
- Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CiC.
- Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
- Ensure the education achievement of CiC and CPiC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
- Report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of CiC through the authority's corporate parenting structures

4.1. The [head teacher](#) is responsible for:

- Appointing the designated teacher for CiC and CPiC.
- Allowing the designated teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the [governing board annually](#) on the following:
 - The number of CiC and CPiC in the school
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
 - The attendance of CiC and CPiC, compared to other pupil groups
 - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
 - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CiC and CPiC is a key priority.
 - Promoting actively challenging negative stereotypes of CiC.

4.2. The designated teacher for CiC and CPiC is Mrs Zoe McLaughlin and is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CiC and CPiC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CiC and CPiC at the school.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the virtual school.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CiC are involved in reviewing and setting their own targets.
- Gaining the knowledge and skills to advise and support staff on teaching and behaviour strategies for CiC and CPiC
- Ensuring that CiC and CPiC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support provided by the pastoral team.
- Supporting new CiC admissions to the school:
 - Provide pre-admission support and where appropriate, an enhanced 'welcome' phase in the first days and weeks at the school
 - On admission of a CiC to the school, liaising with the VS to agree a date for a PEP meeting.
- Leading on how the child's personal education plan PEP is developed and used in school to ensure the child's progress towards targets is supported and monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Working with the child's VSH and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the headteacher to submit an annual report to the governing board, which details the progress of all CiC and CPiC.

4.3. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CiC if the child has Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of CPiC.

4.4. All school staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CiC and CPiC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Actively seeking advice, guidance or training to:
- Understand some of the typical issues CiC and CPiC may present, such as early years trauma and attachment disorder
- Learn how to respond appropriately to the behavioural challenges these may manifest as, adapting any general policies appropriately.
- Being vigilant for any signs
 - of bullying or peer on peer abuse towards CiC or CPiC
 - safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CiC and CPiC
- Promoting the self-esteem of CiC and CPiC.

5. Personal education plans (PEPs)

- 5.1. All CiC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.
- 5.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- 5.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.
- 5.4. The school will work with other professionals and the child's carers to use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.
- 5.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the designated teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.
- 5.6. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including:
 - If relevant, access to quality nursery provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
 - On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
 - Suitable education agreed with the LA, where the child is not in school because of suspension or exclusion, (this should be in place on the 2nd day of any fixed term exclusion).
 - Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
 - School attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate. (attendance data will be drawn down into the PEP from the completion of the online attendance records through CRM)
 - Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
 - Support to achieve at least expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
 - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focusses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
 - Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

6. Working with agencies and the VSH

- 6.1. The school will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers, in addition to parents/carers or residential social workers.
- 6.2. The school will coordinate their review meetings; for example, [hold their annual EHCP review at the same time as a PEP review](#)
- 6.3. The school will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues.
- 6.4. The school will complete daily online attendance records which will enable to the VS to monitor the attendance of CiC and react promptly if attendance falls or unexplained absences occur. For some CiC it is essential that the VS has this information on a daily basis.
- 6.5. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.
- 6.6. The designated teacher for CIC and CPiC will communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP. **NB PEP dates are set through the virtual school and any changes should only be made through the virtual school.**
- 6.7. Through the designated teacher, the school will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- 6.8. The designated teacher will ensure that the PEP targets clearly show how the PPG will be used. If necessary this may involve consulting the VS prior to a PEP meeting to gain advice on using the PPG most effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.
- 6.9. If deemed necessary, the school will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs. This may draw down funds from the schools nominal high needs budget.
- 6.10. The designated teacher will ensure prompt, consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding CiC who are absent without authorisation.
- 6.11. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CIC and CPiC. This may be across a MAT or through network meetings provided by the VS.

7. Training

7.1. The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of CiC and CPiC have either received or identified and prioritised the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- supporting SEMH
- Attachment and the impact of trauma
- Attendance / Exclusions
- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment

8. Pupil mental health

8.1. CiC and CPiC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education. Designated teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

8.2. At Newdale Primary School and Nursery we ensure that each pupil in care has an identified member of staff they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school – Mrs R Powell and pastoral staff.

8.3. The designated teacher will work with the VSH to ensure the school is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CiC and CPiC, and when appropriate, knows how to access further assessment and support

8.4. To measure, if necessary, the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by CiC. A Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CiC's emotional wellbeing. Teachers will regularly complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

9. Exclusions

- 9.1. Past experiences of CiC and CPiC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's [Behavioural Policy](#), ensuring that it is suitably flexible and inclusive. (See DfE guidance for DTs)
- 9.2. The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' and, as far as possible, avoid excluding any CiC and CPiC.
- 9.3. Where the school has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSH will be informed at the earliest opportunity
- 9.4. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort. Where a fixed term exclusion is considered:
 - the school will consult with the VS prior to the exclusion. to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion,
 - in the event of a fixed term exclusion, the school will ensure that suitable alternative provision will be in place from the 2nd day of the exclusion. This will normally be 1:1 tuition
- 9.5. The school will inform parents and carers that they can seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion for CPiC.

10. Pupils with SEND

- 10.1. Support for CiC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.
- 10.2. The SENCO, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.
- 10.3. If appropriate, the VSH will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for CPiC.

11. Information sharing

11.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CIC and CPiC are understood and met.

11.2. The arrangements set out:

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured in order to comply with the latest GDPR.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the school and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual pupils is passed between authorities, departments and the school when pupils move.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1. This policy will be reviewed on an [annual](#) basis by the designated teacher and the [headteacher](#).

12.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is [September 2021](#).

Appendix 1

Designated Teacher's Annual Report to Governing Body on Children in Care.

This report proforma fulfils the statutory requirement that Designated Teachers report to governors annually about support for looked after children. This report is underpinned by the Model Policy for Children in Care, which provides further detail of the policy and practice context. To protect confidentiality, it is important to ensure that the report does not mention individual children by name.

The Virtual School must ensure that statutory requirements are met, so when complete, please email a copy to virtualschool@telford.co.uk who can provide further advice as needed. Thank-you.

Name of School:	This report covers From date: To date:
Name of Designated Governor for children in care	
Name of Designated Teacher for children in care	
1 – What is the position of the designated teacher within the schools structure?	
2 – Has the school adopted the Telford model policy for children in care?	Yes/No If adopted, date governors adopted policy: If no, please comment:
3 – What training about children in care has been undertaken and by whom?	Training: Date:
4 – Has the Designated Teacher attended the termly DT network meetings?	
5 – How many children in care attend the school and in what year groups?	Year group & number of children:
6 – How many children in care have special needs and in what areas?	Number of children and their area of need:
7 – Do all children in care have up to date, high quality PEP's (personal education plans)?	Yes/NO:

	If no please comment:	
8 – Are PEP's transferred promptly if a child in care changes school?	Yes/No: If no please comment:	
9 – Are there any problems with completing PEP's?	Yes/No: If no please comment:	
10 – What are the results for children in care at the end of key stages? One row per child & result (add rows as needed)	Child (no names – please use 'child 1' etc)	Key Stage Result
	Child 1	
	Child 2	
	Child 3	
11 – Do children in care make good progress? (e.g. as per 'levels system' KS1 to 2, 2 levels etc). it may be useful to make a comment on each child, including cases where children didn't make progress in some areas.		
12 – Have there been any issues with admissions or in year transfers for children in care?	Yes/no: If yes please comment:	
13 – Are there any attendance issues for children in care?	Yes/no: If yes please comment:	
14 – Have any children in care had fixed or permanent exclusions?	Yes/no: If yes please comment:	
15 – If children were excluded, was education provided on the first day of any exclusion? What was done to prevent exclusion and support reintegration?		
16 – How effective has support from other agencies and services been? (e.g. social workers, CAMHS)		
17 – How was pupil premium used to support children in care and with what outcome? (e.g. one to one tuition to improve reading, one level of full progress made)		
18 – Has appropriate support been provided if needed by the Telford Virtual School?	Yes/no: If no please comment:	

19 – Has appropriate support been provided if needed by other local authorities?	Yes/no: If no please comment:
20 – Are there other issues that the school wish to raise?	