



**WINTERSTOKE  
HUNDRED  
ACADEMY**

# Looked after Children Policy

Helping and supporting Looked After Children and  
Previously Looked After Children.

September 2020



**Cabot  
Learning  
Federation**

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## 1. History of most recent Policy Change

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, Change in legislation)	Actioned By

## 2. Legislative Compliance

This policy has been written as guidance for staff, parents or carers and young people with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- [The Children and Young Persons Act \(2008\): Section 20 Education](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities for the Designated Teacher for Children in Care \(DCSF 2009\)](#)
- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools \(DCSF 2009\)](#)
- [Pupil Premium information](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Promoting the education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children \(February 2018\) Statutory Guidance](#)
- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018](#)

## 3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The Academy recognises that:

- Young People who are in the care of the Local Authority or Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) have the same rights as all young people, but may have additional needs due to attachment issues, early neglect, separation and loss, trauma and many placement moves. These barriers to learning can affect their educational outcomes and their personal, social and emotional development.
- The terms 'Children in Care' and 'Children Looked After' are inter-changeable.
- There are commonly understood reasons (Social Exclusion Unit Report:2003) why young people who are in the care of the Local Authority often fail to make expected progress in education:
  - Placement instability
  - Higher than average absence
  - Insufficient help if they fall behind
  - Unmet needs - emotional, mental, physical

We at Winterstoke Hundred Academy will do for young people in care what we do for all young people - only more so. We recognise that young people in care often have additional barriers to learning and therefore require additional support. We aim to ensure that young people in care excel, as we aim for all young people to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us as happy and secure individuals, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that their education does matter.

We will listen to what young people in care tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means including liaison with North Somerset's Virtual School, other local authorities, Student Council, surveys, carers, social workers, and health professionals.

Winterstoke Hundred Academy strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and care status of members of the school, young people should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Winterstoke Hundred Academy will specifically support young people in care by:

- Ensuring an effective induction when joining the Academy or when coming into care whilst already on the Academy roll
- Balancing high levels of support with educational challenge
- Ensuring that each looked-after or previously looked-after child has a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Linking each looked-after (LAC) or previously looked-after child (PLAC) to a key worker they relate well to
- Making it a priority to know the young people well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies
- Encouraging and supporting young people in care to take responsibility for their learning
- Engaging young people in care in learning outside the classroom and at 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 looked-after (LAC) or previously looked-after child (PLAC) so that they are not made to feel different from other young people
- Planning for future transitions e.g. to further or higher education
- Ensuring that Looked-after or previously looked-after child-specific Pupil Premium Funding (PP) is targeted to meet their specific needs
- Recognising that they may have missed aspects of their education or social development and put in place plans to help them catch up
- Running specific raising aspirations events targeted at looked-after or previously looked-after children.

## **4. Definitions and Designated Teacher**

### **4.1 Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children**

The terms Child Looked After (CLA) and Child in Care (CLA) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy, we are using the term CLA, as it is the one that is preferred by the young people in North Somerset who have been consulted. 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:

- Young people who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- Young people who are the subject of a care order or interim care order
- Young people who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child
- Young people who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A Child Looked After 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 temporary care placement.

The Children Act 1989 has been supplemented by the Children & Social Work Act 2017, which outlines:

- Changes to the role of Designated Teachers
- The requirement for mental health training for the Designated Teacher
- The status of Previous Looked After Child

## 4.2 Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for Children at Winterstoke Hundred Academy is:

Role	Name	Contact
Designated CLA Teacher	Niamh Forrest	<a href="mailto:Niamh.Forrest@clf.uk">Niamh.Forrest@clf.uk</a>

## 5. Supporting those in Care

### 5.1 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All young people in care must have a Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The Care Plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the CLA's official school record. The Academy and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping young people in care to achieve and enjoy their learning. 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 CLA, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The Virtual School. These meetings will be led and coordinated by the Designated Teacher for CLA.

The PEP should include challenging, curriculum-based targets and support the CLA's educational progress. If the CLA has an Education, Health and Care Plan, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP.

### 5.2 Additional funding – CLA Pupil Premium

Young people in long term 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 Academy is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible young people in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

The Designated Teacher for CLA will report to the Council in the Annual Report on CLA on how this is used and the impact that it has.

### 5.3 Personalised tuition

All young people in care or who were previously looked after children (PLAC) are entitled to additional personalised tuition in English and/or maths, outside of the core curriculum, as part of the government scheme even if they appear to be reaching expected levels. Winterstoke Hundred Academy is committed to prioritising all young people in care for this tuition, and allocating Pupil Premium to fund it where required. This tutoring may be 1:1, 1:2 or small group as is deemed most appropriate to the needs of the individual(s).

## **5.4 Admission/Induction Arrangements**

Young people in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the Academy or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the Academy's expectations and processes and the CLA will meet with the Designated Teacher for CLA. The Designated Teacher for CLA will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the CLA is made to feel supported in our Academy. Consideration will be given to giving the CLA a peer mentor if this will support their progress.

On admission, records will be requested from the CLA's previous school. 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 CLA, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. 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 young people already on the Academy roll enter care, the Academy will ensure that the CLA meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the Academy procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and an initial PEP meeting must be held within 28 days.

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/Academy book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

## **5.5 School Trips and Special Activities**

We aim to ensure that young people 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.

## **5.6 Leaving Arrangements**

When a CLA leaves the Academy we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school or FE/HE institution if appropriate. Where possible, if a destination is known in advance, the future institution will be invited to the final PEP to confirm transition arrangements. All Year 11 Young People in Care will be asked if they would like their preferred post-16 provider to be invited to their PEP as required by the LA guidance.

## **6. Complaints procedure**

If a CLA, 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 for CLA, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the CLA, 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 Academy Council.

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 CLA's education. This meeting may include the named Academy Councillor 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.

Students who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for young people in care through Reconstruct<sup>1</sup> and encouraged to look at the page on Bristol's children in care R Voice website [www.rvoice.co.uk](http://www.rvoice.co.uk)

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Academy Council**

- The Academy Council will ensure that the Designated Teacher for CLA and named Academy Councillor undertake appropriate training
- Councillors will consider an annual report from the Designated Teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CLA with Special Educational Needs or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of North Somerset's Virtual School for Children Looked After. The Report will also outline how the dedicated Pupil Premium funding has been allocated and the impact that it has had
- The Academy Council, Principal and Senior Leadership Team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
  - The Academy has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CLA on roll;
  - The Academy's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CLA;
  - Resources are allocated to support the Designated Teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CLA

### **7.2 Principal**

The role of the Principal is:

- To ensure that, in partnership with the Academy Council, 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 young people in care;
- To make sure that the Designated Teacher, role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the Academy who is likely to be involved in supporting young people in care to achieve;
- In partnership with the Academy Council, to monitor the effectiveness of the role of the Designated Teacher;
- To oversee the development of the policy on Children Looked After;
- To evaluate the standards and achievement of CLA and report these termly to the Academy Council and discuss them at Core meetings.
- To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support young people in care;
- To ensure the Designated Teacher has access to Mental Health training

### **7.3 Designated Teacher**

The Designated Teacher has responsibility for helping Academy staff understand the barriers and effective strategies which affect how CLA/PLAC learn and achieve. The role of the Designated Teacher is:

- To promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CLA/PLAC learn
- To promote the educational achievement of every CLA/PLAC on the Academy's roll

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<sup>1</sup> Reconstruct are an advocacy agency for CiC (<https://www.reconstruct.co.uk/advocacy/>)



- To contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put young people in care at a disadvantage
- To make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support young people in care's learning
- To promote a culture in which CLA/PLAC are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- To be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual young people and in making full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL)
- To make sure that CLA/PLAC are prioritised in tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- To have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the CLA's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the Academy
- To set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all young people in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- To act as the named contact for social care and health professionals and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- To have lead responsibility for helping Academy staff to understand the things which can affect how young people in care learn and achieve.
- To keep the local authority tracking system up to date and ensure accurate return of all progress data.

#### **7.4 All Staff**

Improving the outcomes for CLA and PLAC by ensuring they are included in the life of the Academy is the responsibility of all staff. Their role is:

- To ensure that all young people in care or who have been previously looked after are made to feel welcome and included
- To have high expectations of young people in care's involvement in learning and educational progress
- To be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- To understand the reasons which may be behind a CLA's/PLAC's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other young people
- To understand how important it is to see young people in care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- To appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a CLA's/PLAC's status
- To 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 CLA him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

### **8. Monitoring**

The Principal through the Designated Teacher for CLA will be responsible for the monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The Council will review the Policy every year unless there are any changes to legislation or guidance that require it to be altered in the interim.

An Annual Report on its implementation and on the outcomes for CLA, the impact of the strategies used and the funding allocated will be presented to the Council at the end of each academic year.

An annual update relating to the inclusion of Children Looked After as required by the Local Authority will also be provided.

The Principal will quality assure the PEPs for CLA by sampling and the use of a checklist to maintain quality and ensure compliance with the most up to date guidance. PEPs are also quality assured by virtual schools, and monitoring sheets are provided with rating.

The Designated Teacher for CLA will ensure that the CLA's, as part of the disadvantaged cohort of students, are making progress in line with their peers.

## **9. Links with Other Policies**

### **North Somerset Policies**

#### **Academy's own policies**

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Inclusion Policy (including SEND Information Report)