

Hawthorn School Policy for Children in Care and previous children in care.



Approved by:	Safeguarding and Inclusion
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Last reviewed on:	September 2023
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Next review due by:	September 2025
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Legal Framework:

This policy has due regard to all relevant 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 and previously looked after children".
- DfE (2018) "The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children".
- DfE (2023) "Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement.
- DfE (2023) "Keeping children safe in education 2023".
- DfE (2018) "Working Together to Safeguard Children".

Purpose

To promote the educational attainment, achievement, progression and welfare of children in the care of Newcastle City Council whether they attend a Newcastle City Council school or an Out-of-Authority school and for all children in the care of other local authorities who attend Newcastle City schools. The local authority has a statutory role to play for all children in its care and acts as a Corporate Parent. In light of the extension of the role of Designated Teachers and The Virtual School Head this policy will also make reference to previous children in care who are adopted, have a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order (previously residence order).

Rationale

Children in care (CIC), and previously looked after children, are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of looked after children have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced adverse experiences. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement when compared to their peers. CIC and previously looked after children, often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison to the general population. Fewer looked after children progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being. Experimental data from the DfE suggests that previously looked after children are also not achieving in line with their peers.

Definition

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 emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)
- 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)

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s Home or in a residential school.

The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

For all children who receive more than 75 days of ‘short breaks’ in every 12 months CIC status applies and an Independent Reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

All these groups are said to be “Children in care” (CIC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

For the purpose of this policy, previous CIC include those:

- that were adopted from care
- that left care under a Special Guardianship Order
- that left care under a Residential Order on or after 14 October 1991 (under the Children Act 1989);
- that left care through a Child Arrangement Order
- that were adopted from abroad but were in state or church care in their country of origin

- a) The Name of the Designated Teacher for CIC and previously looked After children at Hawthorn Primary School is:

Mrs Jane Dube, Head Teacher

- b) The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care and previous children in care:

Within School:

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by CIC and previous children in care and that staff understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;

- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of CIC and previous children in care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils, etc;
- To act as an advocate for children in care and those previously in care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, social workers, health professionals and the Newcastle upon Tyne Virtual School and LA Team;
- Oversee this policy and monitor its implementation, feeding back to the governing board annually on the following:
 - The number of CIC and previously in care in the school,
 - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other groups
 - The attendance of CIC and previously in care, compared to other pupil groups,
 - ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CIC is a key priority.
 - ensuring Pupil Premium Plus for previously in care children is managed effectively.
 - Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of CIC.
- To hold a supervisory brief for all CIC, e.g. to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up-to-date. It is important to be aware that some children in care do not want all adults or peers to know about their accommodation or care status;
- To monitor the educational progress, attainment and attendance of CIC and previously in care.
- To include targets on the performance of children in care within the School Development Plan.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual under-achievement, absence from school or internal truancy;
- To celebrate the success of all CIC.

Work with Individual Looked After Children

- To enable the child to contribute to the educational aspects of their care plan;
- To help ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan (the PEP should be initiated by the young person's social worker from the Authority responsible for them). The PEP sets out appropriate targets and support available;

- To consult with the child or young person and ensure they have an appropriate adult who will attend school events e.g. parents' evenings; sports; drama events to provide support and encouragement.

Work with Individual children in care and previous children in care:

- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus is targeted at improving attainment and achievements.

Previous children in care and Pupil Premium Plus:

- Ensure that the parents and guardians of previous children in care are aware of the Pupil Premium Plus and how they can enable the school to apply for it. This means either a letter needs to go out to all parents or information is collected on admissions data collection forms. Parents / guardians will need to provide documentary evidence (such as the legal order) to prove the pupil was previously in care. The pupil is then recorded on the January Census each year.

Liaison with other Partners

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Plan, ensuring all CIC and previous children in care in school are safeguarded;
- To help an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) co-ordinate education and CIC review meetings, so that the Personal Education Plan can inform the child's Care Plan;
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to CIC at care planning meetings and PEP meetings;
- To be the named contact for colleagues in the Newcastle upon Tyne LA Child Team and other local authorities as appropriate;
- To ensure the speedy transfer of information and school records between agencies and other schools;
- To ensure the school admits CIC and previous children in care in line with the Admissions Code of Practice; schools should admit all looked after children separate to 'In Year Fair Access Protocols'.
- To ensure that the Head Teacher considers a range of strategies before exclusion for a CIC, which should be a last resort. This includes contacting the Head of The Virtual School and accessing First Day Response provision.

Training

- To develop a knowledge of Vulnerable Children / Education Inclusion procedures by attending training events organised by the Local Authority and other providers;
- To attend training for Designated Teachers as appropriate;

- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate.

Safeguarding

The school recognises that many CIC and PCIC children have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise the signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst CIC and PCIC as soon as possible.

Where a looked after child or previously looked after child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding e.g. responding to absence from education where being absent may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The head teacher will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout school to ensure that the welfare of CIC and PCIC can be adequately protected.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the head teacher and DSL's any concerns they have over CIC and PCIC in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

- c) The name of a Governor with special responsibility for CIC and PCIC:

Jeff Lough, Safeguarding Link Governor.

- d) The role of that Governor:

- The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis (unless it will be easy to identify individual children whereby work on behalf of all vulnerable groups may be more appropriate):
 - Areas that may be reported;
 - A comparison of test scores for CIC pupils as a discrete group, compared with the attainment and progress of other pupils;
 - The attendance of pupils as a discrete group, compared with other pupils;
 - The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions; and
 - Pupil destinations.
- The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedure ensure that looked-after and previously looked after pupils have equal access to:
 - The national curriculum (if appropriate);
 - Public examinations (if appropriate);
 - Careers guidance;
 - Additional educational support;
 - Extra-curricular activities;
 - Work experience

e) **Responsibility for Children in Care (CIC) in School:**

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is being care for by the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

It is appropriate for Learning Support Assistants to have knowledge that the young person is being cared for only when they are directly involved in the teaching of the young person or the direct supervision of them during breaks and lunch times.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head Teacher or the Designated Teacher for CIC.

f) **Admission Arrangements for CIC and Personal Education Plan (PEP):**

All CIC must have a care plan; PEP's are an integral part of this care plan. On admission, records (including the PEP) will be requested from the pupil's previous school and a meeting will be held with carer/parent/social worker. A date will be agreed for a new Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of a new CIC being admitted. An appropriate school admissions meeting will take place. In some cases it may be helpful to provide a mentor from within or external to the school community to support transition. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make progress and fulfil their potential.

g) **Involving the Young Person:**

It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. It is good practice to consult and share with a young person appropriate records that are held by school and the local authority. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the social worker, and their carer(s) are working together to help them achieve in school.

CIC and PCIC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues which impact on their behaviour and education. The Designated Person(s) will have awareness, training and skills to support the management of the child's mental health needs. They will ensure they and staff maintain regular contact with CIC and PCIC listening and promoting positive mental health and monitoring any changes in behaviour and social inclination of these pupils.

The head teacher and DSL's will work alongside the pupil and their support agencies including SENCo and pastoral staff, social worker to coordinate and support the child's needs being met.

The school's SEMH policy supports dealing with all potential or explicit mental health issues that CIC and PCIC may face.

A strengths and difficulties questionnaire will be used on a termly basis to help social workers and teachers to support a child's mental health and learning needs. Teachers will help complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment.

h) **Communication with Other Agencies (CIC):**

Schools should ensure that a copy of all reports (eg end of year reports) should be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker in addition to the Foster Carer or Residential Social Worker. It should be agreed at the PEP meeting what information parents will receive, this needs to be in line with the legal framework. A Social Worker will be able to advise on correspondence with parents and approaches to normalise consent for routine school activities.

i) **Assessment, Monitoring and Review Procedures for CIC:**

Each looked-after pupil will have a Care Plan that will include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that the Social Worker takes a lead in developing. This will identify, success, specific areas of concern and include achievable targets. The PEP developed by Newcastle City Council is age group specific. Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance;
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise);
- Behaviour;
- Homework;
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities;
- Special needs (if any);
- Support being provided to achieve expected level of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications;
- Ongoing catch up support for those children who may have fallen behind;
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school;
- Use of Pupil Premium Plus
- Development needs (short and long-term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences); and
- Long-term plans and aspirations (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations).
- School will coordinate pupil review meetings including annual review of CIC with their statutory care review.

The PEP will be updated at least **termly**, as part of the Statutory Reviewing process carried out by Children's Social Care. The PEP will be stored on the local authority CCM case management system and circulated to all key parties who attended the PEP meeting.

Suspension and exclusion:

Past experiences of CIC and PCIC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy (this incorporates suspensions and exclusion guidance). We understand that a suspension or exclusion for a CIC pupil can make them more vulnerable and disengaged. The head teacher will recognise this and try to balance and protect the needs of all pupils to ensure a calm and safe environment for everyone, devising strategies that both taken are taken into consideration.

Where we have concerns about a CIC's behaviour we will contact the Virtual School Head at the earliest opportunity and engage proactively with social

care to provide support and understanding to improve behaviour. This will also be discussed at the termly PEP review.

Suspension or exclusion will only be sanctioned as a last resort, or where the pupil being allowed to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Where a child in care is at risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, we will engage with the designated person, pupil's parents or carers at the earliest opportunity. We contact the VSH to work together to try to resolve situation.

Where a child in care is excluded, the school will document the provision of immediate suitable education in the pupil's PEP.

Pupils with SEND:

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. The SENCo will liaise with the class teacher, DSL and specialists as well as carers to consider appropriate support and interventions for learning.

The DSL and the SENCo will ensure that CIC and previously in care with SEN are supported in line with the SEN Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for CIC, e.g. where CIC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

Information Sharing:

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CIC and previously in care are understood and met. The arrangements are:

- Who will have access to information on CIC and PCIC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of and allowed to challenge information 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.

Newcastle City Council will:

- Provide a Virtual School Head (VSH) who has responsibility for championing the education of CIC and previously children in care.
- The designated teacher for CIC and PCIC will communicate with the VSH and the child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.
- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for children in care.
- Ensure that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil
- Ensure that CIC receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every CIC has a school to go to within 20 school days of coming into care or of coming to Newcastle from another authority

- Make sure that each CIC has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for CIC and previous children in care and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible for CIC and previously in care.
- Be available to provide advice and information for schools and parents / guardians for previously in care children.
- Provide advice and guidance for CIC and Care Leavers in Further and Higher Education
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying additional needs and the special education needs of CIC and work collaboratively with schools, other services and agencies to meet those needs
- Hold events that celebrate the achievement of children in care.
- Consider the views of all CIC through a variety of strategies including the Children in Care Council and Youth Council

Further information available on The Virtual School Website:
www.newcastle.gov.uk/virtualschool

DfE Statutory Guidance:

[Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children](#)

[Statutory Guidance for Local Authority and Virtual School Head](#)

Local Authority contact details for the Education of CIC and previously in care children are:

Newcastle City Council Virtual School:

Karl Harms.

Headteacher.

Newcastle Virtual School.

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