Child in Care (CIC) Policy

Reviewed: November 2026 **Next Review: November 2027**

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (CIC) POLICY

Designated teacher: Sarah Wright

Governor with responsibility for CIC: Caroline Brookes

At Walter Halls Primary School, we recognise that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorse Nottingham City Council's policy and welcomes children who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Nottingham City.

This policy includes requirements set out in 'Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004' and associated guidance on the education of Looked after Children including the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Walter Halls' approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Looked after Children is based on the following principles:

- prioritising education set within an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum
- listening to the child
- working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies
- promoting attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability within a positive learning environment
- identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources
- having high expectations

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, looked after children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Barriers to their progress include a high level of disruption and change in school placements, lack of motivation or involvement in extra-curricular activities. Most children will have experience high levels of trauma and stress which means that children will easily dysregulate. Many children will display attachment difficulties and we recognise that this impacts greatly on children's readiness for learning.

Walter Halls Primary School believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every child can be successful. This policy should be read alongside the safeguarding policy, e-safety, mobile phones and confidentiality policy.

Admission Arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements children may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children in Care in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DCSF Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations 2006)

Support and Resources

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Children in Care, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

Duties of the Designated Teacher are outlined in the Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies: The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in Care published September 2009.

The duties of the Designated Teacher will include:

- ensuring that children are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed
- maintaining an up-to-date record of the Looked after Children in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for children. This will include monitoring and tracking progress of children and the planning of suitable interventions. holding a supervisory brief for all children being looked after and acting as advocate
- liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage children may face
- establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies

- ensuring Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings are held regularly and information passed to all those concerned, including the local authority.
- Ensure that the PEP targets accurately reflect the needs of the child and that the child's voice is represented in PEP paperwork.
- attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Looked after Children
- applying for additional funding using the Education Progress Grants (EPG) to support each child's individual needs
- produce a report at least annually to inform senior staff and governors of achievement and raise any concerns

What Governors need to know

- Governors need to know
- the number of Looked After Children on roll
- how well they are performing compared to other young people in their school
- that there are national and local targets for children around end of key stage tests.
- the name of their school's Designated Teacher
- how the school specifically supports this group of young people.
- that the attendance of this specific group is closely monitored.

The Local Authority offers training to school governors interested in finding out more about their responsibilities regarding Looked after Children and Young People.
Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Children in Care in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A PEP will be initiated within 20 school days of the Child in Care starting at the school or being taken into care and will be reviewed regularly and as necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the child. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.
It is vital that the Looked after Child or Young Person is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

Walter Halls Primary School recognises that Children in Care are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a child is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Staff Development and Training

The designated teacher will attend network meetings regarding local developments and raising the attainment of Children in Care and training opportunities and cascade this knowledge to the appropriate staff. The designated teacher will also arrange for specific training in areas such as attachment.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children in Care, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include having English as an additional language, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs. Midday staff will be trained to an appropriate level and will be supported to understand that children may need additional support at lunchtimes and may struggle with the structure at this time of day.

The teacher with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Children in Care who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

In line with the confidentiality policy and safeguarding policy all information about looked after children will be stored confidentially in the locked filing cabinet. The designated teacher will inform the relevant staff information about individual children on a need-to-know basis.

Home-school liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children in Care to achieve their potential. We understand that there are many points throughout the school year that can be emotive for children and strive to develop an open communication with parents to enable us to better understand the children in our care.

At Walter Halls we understand that some adoptive parents will be first time parents and may require additional support for school and the agencies who work with them. We also recognise that siblings may need additional support when a new foster child or adoptive child joins the family home and that this could impact on them emotionally and therefore academically. In these circumstances class teachers and teaching assistants will liaise closely with families to provide siblings with appropriate support.

Parents evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the Child in Care, including Social Care teams; Community Educational Psychologist; Health services; CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams and Clinical psychologists.

Safeguarding: E-safety

It is crucial that **no information or photographs** pertaining to vulnerable children are used on the school's website. It is also made clear in these policies that photographs from class assemblies, school trips or events must not be uploaded onto social media sites, as children may be located by their birth families and in some cases, this can put children at risk.

We also recognise that it is particularly important that our Children in Care understand the risks of posting to social media sites and using the internet without supervision and this is tackled in an age-appropriate manner across school. Please refer to our e-safety policy for more information.

Register of Looked After Children

Each education establishment is required to maintain a register of children in care. This should include up-to-date information about their care status, details of their Personal Education Plans, if they are on the Gifted and Talented register, if their first language is not English or if they have any SEN needs as well as a record of those working with the child.

This will be available to Local authority Officers, Ofsted and Comprehensive Area Assessment Inspectors together with pertinent academic records comparing this discrete group with the rest of the school population.

It is part of the role and responsibility of the Designated Teacher to maintain this record and ensure that staff in school are familiar with any relevant information

Targets and Indicators for Looked After Children

There are several national and local targets and indicators used to measure the educational success of Looked After Children. These include:

- attend school regularly with as few absences, authorised or unauthorised as possible
- attain 5 or more GCSEs (including English & Maths) at grades A* - C or the equivalent
- attain secure or higher in the end of key stage 2 in English and Maths
- However, not all children will be working at or above national expectations. Their levels should be assessed individually and every effort made, including close tracking and monitoring of attainment, to ensure they make the necessary progress to reach their potential

PEPs

Personal Education Plans

What is a PEP?

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an important document which has formed part of the official school record for Children in Care/Young People (CIC/YP) since 2005. It should be a continuous record of their achievements, identification of their educational and developmental needs, clear attainment targets and long-term plans and aspirations.

Its purpose is to clarify what is needed by the child to ensure progression.

It is important that social workers and the Designated Teacher work together to ensure that children, young people and their carers are involved in the planning of PEPs and that their views are heard and their interests represented.

A PEP is not a substitute for a good relationship between the designated teacher and the social worker, but a high-quality PEP can help teachers, social workers and other professionals to work together to put in place appropriate teaching support for the child.

Who does what and when?

The people involved in a PEP will vary according to the age, needs and circumstances of the child. Carers, young people, social workers and school staff, in particular the Designated Teacher, will all be involved and for older Looked after Young People representatives from Futures and workplace learning provisions may also be involved. Many children will work with a named trusted adult in school, who may be a learning mentor, key worker or teaching assistant. This person may provide social and emotional support and be instrumental in supporting the young person to reach agreed targets.

The PEP is initiated by the child's social worker, but the school's Designated Teacher should play a key role in the design and review process, alongside the child and the carer. A key aspect of the Designated Teacher's role is involvement in the design and delivery of PEPs

A PEP should be put in place for all children in public care (looked after) or statutory school age:

- When a child enters public care, the social worker will inform the school and the local authority. The social worker is responsible for initiating a PEP
- The PEP should be agreed as soon as possible and at least within 20 school days of entering care or of joining a new school. The PEP is normally reviewed concurrently with the Care Plan at the 28-day review, three (3) month and six (6) month review and then at a minimum of every six (6) months. Provision should be made to ensure that the Care Review and concurrent PEP review are not scheduled to take place during school holidays when school staff will not be available.

How do you make sure a PEP is good and effective?

The PEP should:

- recognise, record and celebrate strengths and successes
- Identify academic and developmental needs
- provide an effective starting point for identifying gifts and talents as well as needs and developing provision which matches those abilities.
- set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-limited) personal and academic targets which are challenging and practical
- set out what is needed to ensure the progression of each child or young person in care
- articulate short-, medium- and long-term aspirations and plans
- agree specific timescales and responsibilities (who will do what and by when)
- explore and identify appropriate teaching and learning styles
- Identify strategies for the school to implement
- Identify how the pupil premium funding is allocated
- ensure the child has their full entitlement to support including EPG and 1:1 tuition be regularly reviewed and updated.

Prompts to help develop an effective PEP

- How does the plan contribute to raising the aspirations of the child/young person?
- How is the development of the PEP used to facilitate strong relationships between staff, pupil and carers?
- How many different criteria are considered when identifying learning strengths and abilities?
- Is the school confident that no gifts and talents or additional needs are being masked? How do you know?
- Does the pupil have a central role in developing the PEP? e.g. has a learning conversation taken place to identify what the pupil's interests and ambitions are?
- Is specialist mentoring which supports learning appropriately, or specifically develops gifts and talents, available and, where appropriate, does this include first language support?

- What account has been taken of experiences, achievements and abilities demonstrated in previous placements or schools? Are these experiences and achievements fully incorporated into the development of future provision?
- Is the development of the PEP used to identify opportunities for celebration of achievement both within and outside school?
- Does the PEP detail opportunities for the social and emotional aspects of learning which could overcome barriers to learning or support access to provision for gifts and talents?
- Does the plan detail access to appropriately diverse role models, including from different social and cultural backgrounds, for Gifted and Talented pupils in care or those with additional needs?
- Is the range of intervention opportunities (where appropriate such as out-for-school/recreational/extra-curricular /family) culturally sensitive? Do they match the child's experience and maturity?

Education Progress Grants.

Eligibility criteria

All CICs including those not educated in mainstream settings and those placed out of LA area who have been identified as at risk of not reaching their targets, not necessarily national targets, are eligible to be considered for an EPG. This should always have an education focus.

EPGs

- determined at specific points throughout the year
- EPG requests run within financial year, so an EPG to fund additional tuition would need to be considered at the first PEP review meeting of the year to allow time to arrange the tuition. reviewed at PEP meetings or otherwise if circumstances change
- should provide additional personalised support to the child
- should pay for activities or resources which support learning and development of children additional to those a parent would usually be expected to fund for a child not looked after
- should support improvement to child's educational attainment
- should link to educational objectives outlined in PEP e.g.

- extra 1:1 tuition
- out of school learning and development to raise self-esteem and confidence
- personalised educational trips and visits not organised by school as part of curriculum
- learning resources not covered by fostering allowances or children's homes fees
- wider activities to help learning and development
- additional support for vocational training

- is not ring-fenced
- should be used to prevent children from falling behind or if they are already behind to help them catch up

- additional, not instead of, services already provided e.g. SEN statement requirements

- Things covered by fostering allowances/children's homes fees
- School trips
- Basic equipment
- Alternative provision for children who are excluded from mainstream school

Local authorities

- are responsible for establishing local eligibility criteria
- should establish process for determining which children are eligible
- should provide EPG for all eligible children
- pay especial attention to the needs of particularly vulnerable children e.g. those who

- have recently become looked after
- have experienced repeated episodes of care
- are placed out of the authority
- are in residential children's home
- have moved schools mid-year or have experienced multiple school moves
- are not in mainstream education (e.g. PRUs)
- have experienced periods with no educational provision
- have additional needs/SEN

One-to-one tuition

Looked after Children and Young People in years 5 and 6, including those placed in a school out of the local authority area, are entitled to 10 hours of one-to-one tuition for English or Maths under a scheme funded through the local authority.

Schools need to identify the pupil and submit a bid to the authority. The school must find a suitable tutor, who may be a member of the school staff or may be a suitably qualified teacher from another institution.

Tuition should take place for one hour per week with the tutor engaging for 10 weeks with the child but having a planning session with the class teacher before the tutorial sessions begin and a feedback session at the end of the time.

Admissions

For many children and young people who are looked after, school can be the only stable thing in their lives. At a time when their world is changing and everything that they know is unstable the routine of coming to school and seeing familiar faces may offer a tremendous security. It may not always be possible, but whenever a young person is taken into care they should stay at the same school.

However, when they have to move away to a foster placement, it is vital that their routine is not disrupted any more than necessary and that a new school place should be found as soon as possible.

National, local and school policy should all reflect the particular needs of Children in Care.

Current legislation supporting the admission of Children in Care stipulates:

- A school place should be found as quickly as possible.
- Regulations require admission authorities to give children in care the highest priority in their admission arrangements, although exceptions apply to faith schools.
- Class size regulations allow for the admission of a looked after child as an excepted child if admitted outside the normal admission round but only for the remainder of that academic year after which the qualifying measures must be taken.
- Section 50 of the EIA 2006 empowers local authorities to direct admission authorities to admit looked after children. It also provides for those authorities to appeal to the adjudicator against such directions.

Exclusions

Children in Care are particularly vulnerable to exclusions and educational settings should be especially sensitive to exclusion issues where Children and Young People in Care are concerned.

When then there is evidence that the CIC/YP is having difficulties in school which may be reflected through changes in attitude and behaviour, the setting should be proactive in identifying the causes of the difficulties and putting appropriate interventions into place. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Where a CIC is at risk of exclusion the school should try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting should be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan should be drawn up to reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan.

Transport

Children in care may have changes of foster or community care placement which will affect their journey to school.

It is often felt that it is more important for the Child in Care to continue to attend the same school which provides consistency, stability and continuity, rather than transfer to a local school. This is especially true when the placement is known to be a short-term care arrangement or the Looked after Child or Young Person is soon to take exams or leave school. Paragraph 3.10 of Nottingham Home to School Transport Policy – Children in Care Placements states:

"For children in foster or community homes the designated school is one assigned to the home. Any exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. This may include short-term foster or care placements.
Where a child who is in public care and "Looked After" by the Authority moves home and it is decided that it is in the child's interests to continue to attend the same school, the Authority may decide to provide travel assistance to ensure continuity of education for the child. In these instances, consideration will be given to the distance from home to school and the length of time the child is scheduled to attend the school."

Legislation regarding Looked After Children

The extensive and complex needs of Looked after Children and Young People are considered and supported by various pieces of legislation.

ACCOMMODATION AND CARE ORDERS

The Children Act 1989 outlines responsibilities to meet the needs of children with particular need of local authority intervention and support. Children may be in care or accommodated in different ways as outlined in What is a "Looked after Child"?

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children.
Whenever possible, the social worker, together with other relevant local authority services, should make all necessary efforts to minimise disruption to the child's education, including helping them to stay at the same school or setting if this is possible. However, sometimes a new education placement is required because a placement has to be made in an emergency or an educational placement has broken down. Where there is an out-of-authority placement the educational placement may need to be changed because of difficulties with travel and lack of contact with peers. The placing authority is required to ensure that a suitable new education placement is secured within 20 school days.
Wherever the child is educated, the placing authority continues to have a duty to promote the educational achievement of the child for as long as the child continues to be looked after by them and should continue to advocate for that child in the same way as any good parent would. It is vital that for both care and education placements for CIC that over-riding consideration is in the child's best interests and in the case of educational placement for a child with SEN it should be done after a thorough assessment of the child's needs.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Section 317 of the Education Act 1996 stipulates responsibilities schools have for children with special educational needs (SEN). A disproportionate number (60%) of CICs have special educational needs and nationally 28% have statements of SEN. The Local Authority has responsibility for children with statements.

Section 321(3) of the Education Act 1996 specifies the responsibilities a Local Authority has for Looked After Children who may need an assessment for a statement. It is the responsibility of the local authority in which the child is ordinarily resident which has responsibility for assessment, issuing and maintaining the statement. It is possible that for the best interests of the child whose placement is in a different authority with the agreement of both authorities, for this responsibility to be taken on by the placing authority. The placing authority should be engaged in the assessment process where they are the corporate parent of the child and should advocate for and support the child in the same way as any good parent would.

Regulation 23 of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 provides for the transfer of the statement for a Looked after Child who has an out-of-authority placement. Good practice is that local authorities should always discuss moves of CIC with receiving authorities before a final decision is made.

Regulation 5 of the Arrangements for placements of Children (General) Regulations 1991 places a duty of notification on placing authorities whenever they place a child out-of-authority including those in 52-week residential placements.

MONITORING

The Children Act 2004 provides for joint inspection of all children's services in an area. As part of the Joint Area Review (J.A.R.) consideration is given to how the education provided meets the needs of Looked after Children.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations 2006 require admissions authorities to give top priority for admissions to Children in Care in their oversubscription criteria

WELFARE

Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 stipulates that local authorities in England must "act under" its guidance when performing their duties under section 22 (3)(a) (duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of a looked after child) section 22 (3A) (duty to promote the educational attainment of looked after children) and section 23(1)(b) (duty to maintain a looked after child in other respects apart from the provision of) of the Children Act 1989.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Accommodated - Children who are accommodated under voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20). Parents continue to have primary responsibility but the local authority acts as a corporate parent. The person who has parental authority is fully involved in all decision-making and can take the child away from local authority accommodation at any time.
- Advocate – someone who provides independent help and support of CIC/YP
- Care order - A care order is made by a court when it considered to be in the best interests of a child who has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. The local authority shares parental responsibility with the parents. The care order can last until the child is aged 18 or until an alternative order, such as adoption, is made or until the order is discharged.
- Care plan – arranged by the social worker, this includes the CIC/YP's details, background, needs, strategies to meet the needs and is compulsory for every CIC/YP. It has to be reviewed regularly at the Care Plan Review meeting.
- Care Plan Review – There is a statutory requirement (Children Act 1989) that all CIC/YP have regular, independent reviews held within 28 days of the start of a placement, then within three months and every following six months. This should include consultation with all those involved in the care and education of the child and should be attended by the child/young person, their family and carer, the social worker. Wherever possible this should coincide with the PEP review meeting
- Child – anyone under 18 years of age
- Child in need (CIN) – a child who is "unlikely to achieve or maintain…a reasonable standard of health and development without the provision of services by a local authority…" (Children Act 1989)
- Futures – organisation which provides information and guidance for all young people aged 13 – 19
- Contact Order – court order setting out contact arrangements for CIC/YP with other person named in order (usually family member/s)
- Designated Teacher – qualified teacher with sufficient authority to enable appropriate provision and support in school to meet identified needs of CIC/YP and act as advocate on their behalf
- EPG- Education progress grant which can be applied for through the Virtual School Foster carer – person who looks after children in care on behalf of local authority Leaving Care Service – service which provides advice and support on accommodation, benefits, employment, training etc for 16–17-year-olds leaving care.
- Looked after Children/Young People CIC/YP – those who are either subject to a care order or who are accommodated.
- Parenting order – court order requiring parents to attend guidance sessions.
- Pathway Plan – CIC/YP leaving care at 16-17 have Pathway Plan to help them plan

their future and to find accommodation, claim benefits, find suitable employment or training.

- Personal Education Plan (PEP) – a statutory document initiated within 20 school days of a child going into care or changing educational setting. It should be reviewed regularly (every six months at least), ideally at the same time as the care plan review. The PEP records progress to date as well as details of child, carer etc. and identifies achievements as well as areas where support is needed in school. Strategies and resources, including access to services, to support the CIC/YP reach short and long- term goals are identified and necessary arrangements made.
- Residential care/Children's Home –a residential home run by the local authority or an approved agency where a Looked after Child/Young Person is placed.
- Respite care – short-term accommodation placements to support family

Useful links
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/childrenincare
www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess
www.teachers.tv
www.governet.co.uk
www.teachernet.gov.uk