

Children in Care Policy

Policy Type:	Local
Approved by:	AQC
Link Councillor:	
Designated Teacher for Children in Care:	Helen Prinsloo
Effective From:	March 2025
Revision date:	March 2026

Policy Aims and Objectives

The Children in Care Policy relates to both Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (CPLA). We will refer to these groups of young people collectively as 'Care Experienced'.

Children Looked after (CLA) are those children who The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'.

When a child or young person is taken into Care by a local authority under a Court Order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their Care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of Care Orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the Final Order.

A Personal Education Plan is offered to every young person in Care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every six weeks.

The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles:

- prioritising education
- having high expectations and aspiration
- inclusion – Changing and challenging attitudes
- achieving continuity and stability
- early intervention – priority action
- listening to children

Aims:

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all young people.
- To support our care experienced students and to give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our care experienced students by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

Roles and responsibilities:

The Academy Quality Council will:

- Ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher and Councillor in accordance with the Regulations. Ensure the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- Monitor the College's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of care experienced children.
- Ensure all councillors are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on the education of care experienced children.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the role and as a minimum, receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher.
- Scrutinise the College's admission procedures to ensure students are admitted into the College as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing stability for care experienced children. .
- Champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teacher.

The Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will:

- Promote a culture in which children in care believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- Appoint a Designated Teacher for care experienced children (Designated teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team)
- Empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities.

- Ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children in care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- Recognise the particular circumstances of care experienced children and provide for these in all other school policies.
- Ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of and provide safeguards for individual children.
- Commit to working with the local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of children in care.

The Designated Teacher for children in care will:

- Have high expectations of care experienced children's involvement in learning and educational progress.
- Monitor the educational progress of all children in care in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the College community.
- Intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from College or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- Act as an advocate for care experienced children.
- Inform members of staff of the general educational needs of care experienced children.
- Promote the involvement of these children during out of College hours learning.
- Be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- Ensure every child in care has the opportunity to have a Personal Education Plan that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the young person' to be heard.
- Attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- Provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- Present regular reports to College AQC, including an Annual Report.
- Access statutory training events organised by Virtual School (as a minimum requirement).
- Cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

All Staff will:

- Have high aspirations for care experienced children. .
- Provide necessary data and information to support the Personal Education Plan process.
- Raise concerns with the Personal Tutor or Designated Teacher if a CLA/CPLA is experiencing any challenges and difficulties.