

Welton St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy



Our Vision

As an inclusive Christian community we value each person, seeking to release everyone's full potential as promised by Jesus Christ. We seek to provide a safe, inspiring and creative learning environment providing opportunities for all to flourish. Through challenge, support and care, we strive for excellence in all that we do; always building on the foundations of shared values with consistently high expectations rooted in God's love. Together we are encouraged to be agents of positive change in this world.

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' Romans 15:13

Wisdom Hope Community Dignity

Children in Care and Children Previously in Care Learners Policy

Approved December 2025
Review Annually

Welton St Mary's CE Primary Academy

Children in Care Policy

Designated Teacher – Mrs Thorner

Designated Governor- Mr Joshua Lock

Children in Care (CIC) or Looked after children (LAC), as they are referred to by some Virtual Schools, are some of the most vulnerable pupils in schools. At Welton St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy we believe that it is essential that we provide strong support and remove barriers to learning to help looked after and previously looked after children reach their full potential. This policy framework is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), including *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* (DfE, 2023), and Ofsted's expectations for schools in supporting the progress and well-being of these pupils.

Contextual Background

In Lincolnshire there are currently 728 Children in care and this number is increasing year on year. This can be a traumatic experience and is usually a result of the emotional stress, abuse or trauma arising from family upheaval and domestic turbulence involved.

Definition 'Child in care' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting.

The effects of being taken into care via any of the above group definitions can impact very severely on the child's social and emotional stability. This in turn limits their educational development and the impact of this varies depending upon the age at which the turbulence is experienced.

If a child is taken into care during early years this can mean that language and literacy skills are underdeveloped. Such children are more likely to have missed out on opportunities for language development at home with their parent such as engaging with conversation and sharing books. As education professionals we know that in a majority of cases 'good parenting' is synonymous with getting off to a good start with developing the essential core skills needed for accessing education and schooling.

Additionally, children frequently come into care at later stages after having started schooling. There is much evidence to show there are higher numbers of children coming into care during KS2. This is equally disrupting to educational development. The turbulence

and insecurity involved serves to detract from and limit educational progress. It causes major distraction and is highly unsettling for the child involved. Such emotional upset causes a child to behave differently or to lose control of their emotions. These behaviours are classified as 'attachment disorder' and are usually associated with Children in Care in a high proportion of instances.

Children in care are highly vulnerable group of young people whom we must work to understand better and provide the best support for them. Through no fault of their own they have a disadvantaged start in life.

Dependent upon the type, age, stage and severity of the traumatic experience the child has suffered, children in care are recognisable as they can display varying degrees of some or all of the following characteristics:

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- A negative response to praise
- Poor educational standards in core skills due to missed schooling
- Reluctance to ask for help
- Delayed social, emotional and cognitive development
- The victim of bullying or bullying others
- Prone to mental health issues
- Isolated, with few friends
- Behavioural challenges in class or group situations
- In conflict with rules, organisational arrangements and expected standards

From September 2009 all academies were required to have a suitably experienced Designated Teacher who is tasked to ensure that provisions and support are given to the children in care in a fully coordinated and planned way across the Academy. This needs to be carried out sensitively and appropriately by raising the awareness of staff to key aspects and circumstances affecting learning, and where necessary liaise appropriately for support with the services of the responsible Local Authority.

In Lincolnshire there is a Virtual Academy Headteacher who takes the strategic monitoring role for children in care. The central aim of this is to drive up the standards of support for their education, aiming to close the gap in achievement between them and their peers. Additional funding is provided to support the learning and achievement of children in care.

Children in care are also placed in foster care in Lincolnshire, away from their home county. In this instance, schools need to work with the relevant authorities and virtual schools to connect and support these children too.

For children who have been previously in care, the pupil premium grant aims to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities so that they can reach their full potential. A pupil can only receive one type of pupil premium at a time. Pupil premium for PLAC children is paid directly to

schools based on the number of pupils they record on their October school census. The amount available for each PLAC pupil is £2,570. The pupil premium grant is for the educational benefit of pupils, and spending should be clearly linked to the needs and educational targets of the children.

Pupil premium grant should be used to:

- narrow the attainment gap
- support progress and achievement
- address identified learning needs
- be focused, targeted and specific
- provide direct educational interventions
- support pupils to reach their full potential

As Governors and teachers of Welton St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy,
We aim to:

Governing Body

- Ensure the school has policies and procedures in place to promote the progress of LAC and PLAC.
- Appoints a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of our Academy provision, teaching and learning and support for children in care.

The annual reporting cycle will inform on the following key aspects of provision:

- The number of children in care on roll
- Attendance statistics for any authorised and unauthorised absence
- The frequency, circumstance and reasons for any recorded exclusion
- How they are performing in curriculum subjects, their progress and any value added measure when compared against initial baseline assessment
- The frequency and access to pastoral support
- The frequency of them taking part in extracurricular activities
- The provision arrangements for additional support identified to at the Academy and any externally added booster work provided in the care home
- The quality and updating of the educational targets recorded in the PEP

Headteacher

- Ensure that staff understand their responsibilities in supporting LAC and PLAC.
- Works with the Designated Teacher to prioritise the needs of LAC within the school.

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

- Leads on promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC.
- Helps this vulnerable group to succeed in education, champion their needs, raise awareness and challenge negative assumptions at all levels.
- Liaises with Virtual School Heads and social workers to ensure appropriate support.
- Ensures education plans (PEPs) are in place, effective, and regularly reviewed.
- Attend relevant update training and cascade information for staff development and updating regarding children in care.
- Become the central point of contact at this Academy for all professionals and agencies working with and supporting the individual children in care we have on roll.
- Liaise with the Virtual School in all aspects of the Child in Care progress and support.
- Seek and prioritise meetings with and referrals to appropriate external agencies in situations that require external support.
- Convene urgent multi-agency meetings if a CIC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure any CIC new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Work with class teachers to recognise our responsibility in sharing information to support the child.
- Know who all the CIC are in school and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems are shared appropriately.
- Establish good working relationships and communications with Foster Carers, ensuring information is received and early notification is provided for them to attend meetings and reviews.
- Work with the pastoral team to provide support and sanctuary to help settle children in care into the Academy, and at other times; ensure the children in care feel safe, knows who to trust and who to go to if they feel the need for support.
- Provide written information to assist planning, reviews and reporting as required; through taking the lead role in the assessment, preparation of educational targets and review and recording this into the relevant sections of the child's Personal Education Plan. The PEP should be established within a 10-Academy working day period for any children in care starting on roll. This to include the gradual addition and updating of further information over time e.g. attendance, attainment and progress results.
- Monitor the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved. Develop personalised learning packages for CIC in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensure that the CIC in their school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Ensure that personal information is handled carefully and sensitively and that the child's wishes and preferences are taken into account.
- Ensure the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay.

All School Staff

- Recognise that LAC may face additional challenges and require sensitive support.
- Maintain high expectations for LAC while being aware of potential barriers.
- Ensure the appropriate sensitivities and confidentiality are maintained.
- Respond positively to any request by a child to be the person they want to talk with.
- Ensure that no child in care becomes a victim of stigmatisation at any time and that any such attitudes are swiftly reported and eradicated.
- Positively promote the self-esteem of children in care.
- Convey high aspirations for their educational and personal achievement.
- Be familiar with and respond appropriately to requests for progress and/or attainment information in order to compile the PEP and other documentation necessary for reviews.
- Consider and set appropriately challenging targets and in so doing facilitate the appropriate resources in order to support the child to reach those targets.