

Beaucroft Foundation School & College



Looked after Children (LAC) Policy

Date Adopted: 13th February 2025
Review term: One year
School Lead: Joe Barnett
Linked Governor: Anthony Braine
Signed By:

Policy for the Education for Children in Care (CIC / LAC)

January 2025

Beaucroft school works closely with the Local Authority Virtual Schools and follows their guidelines to ensure Children in Care at Beaucroft are provided with the very best opportunities to achieve their potential.

Section 1: Introduction

Raising the educational achievement of Children in Care

Why do Children in Care often underachieve?

Every Child in Care (CIC) is capable of learning and success in life, yet too many underachieve in education for a wide range of reasons:

- They have experienced significant family disruption and often neglect and abuse before coming into care which can all create significant barriers to learning.
- Movement between care placements and between schools can disrupt learning.
- CIC often need to catch up with learning they have missed.

Families of disabled children LAC/CIC status can be sought because the families are not able to meet the care needs of their disabled child through no fault of their own.

What does the term 'looked after' mean?

'Looked after' is a legal term which applies to children who are in the care of the Local Authority. There are two main types of being looked after:

The child's parents may agree that the child goes into care. This is in the 2007 white paper *Care Matters: Time for Change*, the Government set out a wide range of measures to improve outcomes for CIC, including educational outcomes. In the Children and Families Bill 2013, the following recommendations were made:

The Government is committed to improving life chances for all Looked After Children. Their educational attainment, while improving, is not doing so fast enough. We know that a virtual school head (VSH) can have a positive impact on the educational progress of Looked After Children and so the Bill will require every Local Authority to have a virtual school head to champion

the education of children in the authority's care, as if they all attended the same school.

- often referred to as a 'Section 20', and can include Section 42, (to include College age students).
- The child may be legally removed from their parents without parental consent. This is when the court concludes that a child could be harmed if they stay at home. This is referred to as a 'Care Order'.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to look after the child – this includes ensuring they receive the best education possible. The Local Authority assumes the role of 'corporate parent'. This responsibility is held by every adult employed by the Local Authority including those who work in schools.

What is the difference between 'LAC' and 'CIC'?

None, although 'CIC' is more commonly used in government and legal documentation.

What other care arrangements are there?

Children may be in other arrangements where they live with adults other than their birth parents. This includes:

- Kinship care – children who live with other members of the family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles or older siblings.
- Private fostering arrangements - children who live with other adults such as friends of the family.
- Special guardianship orders – children who live with adults other than their parents who have been granted guardianship of the children by the Local Authority.

Children who live under these arrangements are not 'looked after' in the legal senses and therefore do not have access to the same benefits that legally CIC do.

What is being done at a government level?

Looked-after children Section 20 of the 2008 Act places the following duties on governing bodies:

- to designate a member of staff (the designated teacher) as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children,

including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered pupils at the school;

- to ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training (section 20(2); and
- the governing body and the designated teacher must have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Section 20(3) of the 2008 Act gives the Secretary of State powers to make regulations setting out the qualifications and experience which the designated teacher should have. Following amendments by the 2017 Act, Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 places the similar duties on Academy proprietors in England. The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc) (England) Regulations 2009 require that the designated person is:
 - a qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)); or
 - a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school (regulation 3(3))

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (“the 2008 Act”).

Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (“the 2017 Act”).

Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.

The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.

What about children in the care of other local authorities?

Schools carry responsibility for all CIC, whether they are in the care of Dorset or any other Local Authority. Up to date information on any of our CIC will be provided by their social worker directly.

What are the responsibilities of the school for CIC?

These are set out in three key government documents, which can be downloaded or ordered online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications.

Children in Care at Beaucroft School – January 25

There are 4 pupils who are in the care of a Local Authority. All staff are aware of these children.

These pupils have an e PEP. Class Teachers and Designated LAC teacher contribute and monitor PEPs.

There is Pupil Premium money available to support all these pupils.

The role of the designated teacher and governors

A summary of the main requirements

The Designated teacher is Joe Barnett, and as such is accountable for CIC at the school.

The designated teacher will:

- Promote a culture of high expectation
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting targets
- Be a source of advice for staff
- Prioritise CIC for 1:1 tuition
- Support and communicate with carers
- Lead on the development and implementation of the ePEP
- Monitor progress of children if they leave care
- Update for governors at least once a year

NB: PEP reviews will be carried out at the same time as other review meetings in school whenever possible.

Governors also have a key responsibility towards CIC.

The governing body will:

- Make sure that the designated staff receive appropriate training
- Receive relevant updates

Working with other professionals and agencies to support CIC

The Designated LAC teacher is responsible for working with all agencies involved with the individual pupils (e.g. social workers, virtual school heads), ensuring that communication is effective and any meetings etc. involving the pupil minimise disruption to the pupil's education.

The school will make sure that:

- There is an agreed process in place for how the school works with others in focusing on how everyone contributes to promoting the child's educational achievement.
- School policies (e.g. around Home School Agreements) are communicated to social workers and carers.
- The school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child, especially by finding ways of sharing information through the ePEP and in providing advice to the Local Authority about the impact of disrupting education.

Training

The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the Local Authority guidance.

This policy will be reviewed in line with recommendations from the Local Authorities.

This will be at least annually.

Appendix –

1. Personal Education Plans

Personal Education Plans

All CIC must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority which looks after them. The care plan will identify intended outcomes and objectives for the child and provide the framework within which to work with the child and carers in relation to his or her emotional and behavioural development, identity, relationships and self-care skills. The care plan must also include a health plan and a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which are developed and reviewed in partnership with relevant professionals. In school or any other education establishment the designated teacher for CIC has a statutory role with regard to the development, implementation and monitoring of PEPs.

The PEP, in addition to being part of the overall care plan, is part of a CIC's official school record. If the child moves schools it should be forwarded, along with other school records, to their new school and to the main contact (usually the child's social worker) in the Local Authority which looks after the child.

The PEP is the central platform for the education of CIC, which should be incorporated within each child's Care Plan.

The importance of PEPs

The PEP for CIC is the main way in which designated teachers (or FE equivalent), social workers and Virtual Schools keep track of educational attainment and progress for a CIC. The PEP also allows the Virtual School team to promote and then monitor how the Pupil Premium is used to improve educational outcomes for CIC.

The development and review of the PEP brings together the whole team linked to the CIC at regular intervals to focus on the child's educational progress and personal educational requirements.

The PEP is important to the child too, especially when they are fully involved in agreeing and reviewing actions and targets. The PEP should be seen as a living document which has the child's voice at the centre.

A good PEP

- Sets positively phrased specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited (SMART) educational targets, which are agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate.
- Links the Pupil Premium funding directly to outcomes and the agreed targets.
- Is written with a wide audience in mind - many people who will read it are not familiar with social work or educational language.
- Identifies developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experience.
- Pays reference to providing targeted interventions in core subjects in particular English and Mathematics.
- Records the young persons' achievements and participation in the wider school activities and out of school activities.
- Has clear accountability in terms of who is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Date